

**A Reference Grammar  
of  
Classical Tamil Poetry**

**V. S. RAJAM**





***A Reference Grammar of Classical Tamil Poetry***

***(150 B.C.—pre-fifth/sixth century A.D.)***

*The preparation of this volume was made possible in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent Federal Agency.*

**A Reference Grammar**  
  
**of**  
  
**Classical Tamil Poetry**  
  
**(150 B.C.—pre-fifth/sixth century A.D.)**

**V. S. RAJAM**

**American Philosophical Society**  
**Independence Square • Philadelphia**



**A Reference Grammar**

**of**

**Classical Tamil Poetry**

**(150 B.C.—pre-fifth/sixth century A.D.)**

**V. S. RAJAM**

**American Philosophical Society  
Independence Square • Philadelphia**

MEMOIRS OF THE  
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY  
*Held at Philadelphia*  
*For Promoting Useful Knowledge*  
*Volume 199*

Copyright © 1992 by The American Philosophical Society

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 91-76989  
International Standard Book Number 0-87169-199-X  
US ISSN 0065-9738



TO

*the waters of the Porunai*

*which nurtured my dear parents*

*and*

*the land of the Vaiyai*

*where my revered teachers revealed to me*

*the beauty of Tamil*





# CONTENTS

## PREFACE

## CONVENTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS STUDY

### Section 1

1. Introduction	1
2. Methodology	19
3. Formation Mechanisms	28
4. Phonology	40
5. Morphophonemics	52
6. Theory of Classical Tamil Poetry	113
7. Lengthening of Sounds (aḷapeṭai) and Vowel Clusters	240
8. Person-Number-Gender	267
9. Singular and Plural	270

### Section 2

10. Nouns	278
11. Pronouns	280
12. The Oblique Stem	293
13. Case Markers and Postpositions	303
14. The Particles	393
15. Adjectives or Noun Modifiers	434
16. Numerals	443
17. Collectives and Universals	448
18. Nominal Compounds	466
19. Adjectival Nouns or Appellative Nouns	472

### Section 3

20. Stem Classification on a Phonological Basis	495
21. The Compound Verb Stem	501
22. The Causative Stem	521
23. The Passive Stem	534
24. The Past Stem	542

25. The Non-past Stem	562
<b>Section 4</b>	
26. Past Personal Verbs	585
27. Non-past Personal Verbs	604
28. Negative Personal Verbs	629
29. Past Participial Nouns	644
30. Non-past Participial Nouns	658
31. Negative Participial Nouns	677
32. Verbal Nouns	687
33. Non-past Verbal Nouns	705
34. Negative Verbal Nouns	708
<b>Section 5</b>	
35. A Note on Participles	711
36. The Past Adjectival Participle	715
37. The Non-past Adjectival Participle	721
38. The Negative Adjectival Participle	728
39. The Adverbial Participle	732
40. The Negative Adverbial Participle	746
41. The Infinitive ("to do ...")	752
42. The Negative Infinitive ("not doing ...")	762
43. The Conditional ("if ...")	764
44. The Negative Conditional ("without doing ...")	771
45. The Causal ("since")	773
46. The Concessive of Fact ("although")	778
47. The Concessive of Supposition ("even if")	782
48. The Non-participle as a Participle	786
<b>Section 6</b>	
49. A Note on Mood	801
50. The Imperative/Optative	802
51. The Negative Imperative/Optative	822
52. The Potential ("can, let, may, shall, should do ...")	830
53. The Interrogative	836
54. The Negative al 'not to be ...' and il 'to be non-existent'	840
55. A Note on the Verb ā 'to be'	855

56. A Note on the Verb <u>ān</u> 'to be content'	886
<b>Section 7</b>	
57. Adverbs	897
58. Comparison	908
59. Imitative Words	918
60. Metonymy And Metaphor	922
61. Notes on Miscellaneous Items	927
62. Analysis of a Few Poems	941
<b>Section 8: APPENDIX</b>	
Suffixes, etc.	1005
List of Particles	1078
List of Pronouns	1079
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	
<b>INDEX</b>	





## PREFACE

The following book is intended to be a reference tool for those who seek an understanding of the structure of classical Tamil poetry. Classical Tamil poetry reflects indigenous literary and cultural traditions of southern India, and therefore, a study of it is imperative for obtaining a balanced view of India's past and present cultures. The language which produced this poetry, Tamil, is the only living language of modern India that has an uninterrupted history spanning more than two millennia, and therefore, a study of it becomes even more crucial for a thorough understanding of India's linguistic complexity.

I faced a most difficult challenge when writing this book—to approach the task with an open mind about the formal properties of classical Tamil. Once I accomplished a detachment from preconceived notions, a fresh world opened out for me which was the most gratifying experience. Whenever I came across a different linguistic form or whenever I thought of a different way of viewing things, I was truly excited, almost like a child off from school without any assignment, playing in her own yard trying to catch every snowflake at the first snowfall of the season. Indeed, language reflects a dynamic process like the accumulation of snow, but with a difference. It's dimensions constantly change with each influx from every direction but, unlike the snow, it has a perennial, fluid, and diasporic existence in some form or other. And it is possible to catch at least some snowflakes before they merge with the rest, but one has to be there when they reach the earth.

The seed of my passion for Tamil poetry and grammar was sown in high school when I had to memorize along with poetry some verses from a traditional medieval grammatical treatise in Tamil known as the Nannul (*Nannūl*). Thanks to the good old days of learning when most everything was based on memorizing things, whether lovely ancient poetry or dry grammatical rules, these “sounded” nice and that was sufficient reason to commit them to memory. But it was not until I read one of Browning's poems in college, that I was captivated by the perseverance and dedication that grammar could bring to one's character. Browning wrote about a grammarian:

“ ... ..

Back to his book then: deeper dropped his head:

*Calculus* racked him:

Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead:

*Tussis* attacked him.

... ..

So, with the throttling hands of death at strife,  
Ground he at grammar  
Still, through the rattle, parts of speech were rife;  
While he could stammer  
He settled *Hoti's* business -- let it be! --  
... ..

[*The Poetical Works of Robert Browning*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1974:279–280]

In my case, calculus could not compete with the fascination provided by grammar, literature, and linguistics during my graduate years in Madurai and Philadelphia when I had the opportunity to learn materials more ancient and more modern than *Nannūl*. However, my earlier understanding of Tamil poetry and grammar deepened and took numerous positive turns only when I imparted them to native speakers of Tamil in Madurai and to non-native speakers here in the United States. And it is my Western students and colleagues who alerted me to the lack of a systematic and rigorous tool that would aid them to study classical Tamil. Therefore, my gratitude for the existence of this book starts with my Western friends of Tamil and goes back to my former students and teachers in Madurai.

First I wish to record my gratitude for my teachers who greatly influenced my understanding and appreciation of Tamil poetry and grammar: Mrs. Sarada Krishnamoorthy, Dr. C. Ilakkuvanar, Sri. Avvai Duraisamy Pillai, Sri. A.K. Parantamanar, Dr. Sp. Annamalai, Dr. N. Balusamy, Sri. Kati. Sundaram, Sri. N. Sankaranarayanan, Dr. M. Sundaram, and Dr. Durai Arangasamy.

Writing a book such as this does not just happen without the participation of colleagues and friends who encourage the effort. In the process, I drew upon the expertise of most everyone whom I knew was interested in pre-modern Tamil of Western Linguistics applicable to the study of classical languages. They carefully read through either my original proposal for this volume or sections which developed later into chapters, and always provided useful suggestions. In short, for providing help at crucial junctures to give a momentum and make this volume more user friendly, I thank Ernest Bender (U of Pennsylvania), Rahul Bonner (U of Chicago), George Cardona (U of Pennsylvania), Norman Cutler (U of Chicago), Henry Hoenigswald (U of Pennsylvania), Jim Lindholm (Tamil Language Study Association, Chicago), Leigh Lisker (U of Pennsylvania), J. Neethivanan (Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai), S.

Palaniappan (Dallas), Paula Richman (Oberlin College), Ludo Rocher (U of Pennsylvania), and Franklin Southworth (U of Pennsylvania). I thank Professor A.K. Ramanujan (U of Chicago) and Columbia University Press for giving me permission to use the translation of the classical Tamil poem, *purāṇānūru* 278, in *Poems of Love and War*, A.K. Ramanujan, 1985, Columbia University Press, New York.

Three colleagues deserve special mention for their very special contribution to this volume and I am indebted to them. For well over a decade, David Ludden has been a constant source of support for my teaching and research at the University of Pennsylvania. He patiently read through the first draft of the entire volume, and his detailed comments contributed to the improved second draft. I am thankful for his continued interest in Tamil. David Shulman (Hebrew University, Jerusalem) enthusiastically read large sections of the second draft and with his brilliant insight provided encouragement to my accomplishment of the pre-publication copy. He also generously provided a poetic translation of a classical Tamil poem, *aṅkurunūru* 423, which I have used in the last chapter. I am fortunate for having established an everlasting contact with this star. With his endless patience and flair for poetry, George L. Hart (U of California, Berkeley) translated especially for this volume, a very challenging complex classical Tamil poem, *akanānūru* 9, which appears in the last chapter. As one of the reviewers of the manuscript for publication, he suggested that I expand the chapter on classical Tamil meter. This suggestion gave me an excellent opportunity to provide certain details about classical Tamil poems which I would not otherwise have had in my intention not to overwhelm the readers. I used the Tamil and TimesIndian fonts he has developed for the Apple Macintosh computer for creating the text base and doing the analysis for an ongoing project, of which this volume is a part.

My thanks are also due to the other anonymous reviewer of the manuscript for the American Philosophical Society and to Bruce Perry (U of Pennsylvania) and Elliot Stern (U of Pennsylvania) who originally provided editorial suggestions for improving the manuscript. I thank Jerome H. Bauer (U of Pennsylvania) whose TimesII font enabled me to use certain special Roman characters in this volume and Branavan Ganesan (U of Pennsylvania) who assisted me in drawing the diagrams which appear in the last chapter.

The brilliant suggestions by Richard Cohen, John Mosteller, Rosane Rocher, and Guy Welbon (all at the U of Pennsylvania) turned the task of desk-top publishing into a worthy pursuit. Carol Brecken-



ridge's (Editor, *Public Culture*, University of Pennsylvania) remarkable editing expertise transformed the chore into a labor of love.

I am grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities, and to Ms. Helen Agüera (NEH), for having supported the creation of this volume. I cannot adequately express my gratitude to the Department of South Asia Regional Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, and in particular, the successive chairpersons, Rosane Rocher, Alan Heston, and Arjun Appadurai, for kindly supporting my ongoing project to create a Historical Reference Grammar of pre-modern Tamil. I sincerely thank the American Philosophical Society for publishing this volume in their Memoirs series. It was very pleasant to work with Ms. Carole Le Faivre (Associate Editor, American Philosophical Society) who was patient and generous with her time. I thank her for her meticulous care and guidance.

Two people at the homefront are owed my deepest indebtedness: my grandfather, V.S. Swaminatha Iyer, who initiated my love for Tamil in my childhood by bribing me with mangoes and half-anna coins for memorizing *tirukkural* couplets; and my son Rajkumar who silently and graciously tolerated my lack of attention whenever I had to retreat into my own universe for producing this book later in my life.

Philadelphia, 1992

V.S.R.

## CONVENTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS STUDY

1. The transliteration scheme in modern Tamil is as follows. Read from the top to the bottom.

Roman	Tamil	Roman	Tamil
a	அ	ñ	ஞ்
ā	ஆ	t	ட்
i	இ	ṇ	ண்
ī	ஈ	t	த்
u	உ	n	ந்
ū	ஊ	p	ப்
e	எ	m	ம்
ē	ஏ	y	ய்
ai	ஐ	r	ர்
o	ஓ	l	ல்
ō	ஔ	v	வ்
au	ஔ	l	ழ்
ḥ	ஃ	l	ள்
k	க்	r	ற்
ṇ	ங்	ṇ	ன்
c	ச்		

In the transliteration of Tamil words, the names of books, places, and persons begin with upper case letters, while the names of the poems surveyed for the study do not.

## 2 - Conventions

### 2. Alphabetical order:

Letters without diacritical marks come before similar letters with diacritical marks, e.g., *a* precedes *ā*. When Tamil examples alone are involved, the modern Tamil alphabetical order (given above) is followed.

### 3. Abbreviations and notations:

adjp	adjectival participle
advp	adverbial participle
aiṅk	<i>aiṅkurunūru</i> (ஈங்குருநூறு )
aka	<i>akanāṇūru</i> (அகநானூறு )
caus	causative
cey	<i>ceyyuḷiyal</i> , a chapter on Tamil prosody in the third book of the <i>Tolkāppiyam</i>
cilap	<i>cilappatikāram</i>
ciṟu	<i>ciṟupāṇārruppaṭai</i> (சிறுபாணாற்றுப்படை )
excl	exclusive
ḷam	<i>ḷampūraṇar</i> , a traditional commentator
incl	inclusive
kali	<i>kalittokai</i> (கலித்தொகை )
ka.vā	<i>kaṭavuḷ vāḷttu</i> (கடவுள் வாழ்த்து, "invocation")
kuṟi	<i>kuṟiṅcippāṭṭu</i> (குறிஞ்சிப்பாட்டு )
kuṟu	<i>kuṟuntokai</i> (குறுந்தொகை )
malai	<i>malaipaṭukaṭām</i> (மலைபடுகடாம் )
matu	<i>maturaikkāñci</i> (மதுரைக்காஞ்சி )
maṇi	<i>maṇimēkalai</i> (மணிமேகலை )
mull	<i>mullaippāṭṭu</i> (முல்லைப்பாட்டு )
mutt	<i>muttoḷḷāyiram</i> (முத்தொள்ளாயிரம் )
Nacc	<i>Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar</i> , a traditional commentator
naṟṟ	<i>naṟṟiṇai</i> (நற்றிணை )
neṭu	<i>neṭunalvāṭai</i> (நெடுநல்வாடை )
pari	<i>paripāṭal</i> (பரிபாடல் )

pari.ti	<i>paripāṭal tiraṭṭu</i> (பரிபாடல் திரட்டு; an appendix to the <i>paripāṭal</i> )
pati	<i>patirruppattu</i> (பதிறுப்பத்து)
pati.pati	<i>patirruppattup patikam</i> (பதிறுப்பத்துப் பதிகம் an epilogue at the end of a batch of ten poems in பதிறுப்பத்து)
paṭṭ	<i>paṭṭinappālai</i> (பட்டின்பாலை)
peru	<i>perumpāṇārruppaṭai</i> (பெரும்பாணாற்றுப்படை)
Pē	<i>Pēraciriyar</i> , a traditional commentator
pl	plural
PNG	person-number-gender, person-number-gender suffix
poru	<i>porunarārruppaṭai</i> (பொருநராற்றுப்படை)
puṛa	<i>puṛaṇāṇūru</i> (புறநானூறு)
sg	singular
suff	suffix
tiru	<i>tirumurukārruppaṭai</i> (திருமுருகாற்றுப்படை)
trans	transitive
<	“derived from”
>	“becomes, changes to”
+	“added”
±	“may or may not be added”
*	An item marked with an asterisk, *, does not occur in that particular form but is reconstructed from related forms.

#### 4. Definition/identification of selected items:

##### Affix:

a linguistically significant item consisting of one or more letters  
that is appended to a stem or another affix.

#### 4 - Conventions

Anthologies, The:

the **caṅkam** classics or classical Tamil poems;

the **eṭṭuttokai** and the **pattuppāṭṭu**;

The *akanāṇūru*, *aiṅkuṇūru*, *kalittokai*, *kuṇuntokai*, *naṟṟinaṭi*, *paṭirruppattu*, *paripāṭal*, and *puranāṇūru* are the **eṭṭuttokai** poems.

The *kuṟiṇcippāṭṭu*, *cirupāṇārruppaṭai*, *tirumurukārruppaṭai*, *neṭunalvāṭai*, *paṭṭiṇappālai*, *perumpāṇārruppaṭai*, *porunarārruppaṭai*, *maturaikkāñci*, *malaipaṭukaṭām*, and *mullaippāṭṭu* are the **pattuppāṭṭu** poems.

Aṭiyārkunallār (ca. fourteenth century A.D):

a traditional commentator on the literary work, the *Cilappatikāram*.

*Cilappatikāram* (ca. fifth century A.D):

the first long narrative poem (= epic) in Tamil; composed by Ṭankovaṭikaḷ

Cēṇāvaraiyar (ca. fourteenth century A.D):

a traditional commentator on the *Tolkāppiyam*.

Closing consonant:

a consonant which ends a syllable.

Commentators, traditional:

erudite Tamils who wrote commentaries on Tamil grammars and poetry.

Consonants, homorganic:

consonants which have the same point of articulation.

Ṭampūraṇar (ca. tenth to eleventh centuries A.D.):

a traditional commentator on the *Tolkāppiyam*.

Like-consonants:

consonants which are the same: e.g., **k** and **k**; **m** and **m**.

**Marker:**

an affix appended to a stem; it signifies a certain grammatical concept; here used interchangeably with “affix” or “suffix.”

**Maṇimēkalai** (ca. sixth century A.D.):

the second long narrative poem (= epic) in Tamil; composed by Cīttalai-c-Cāttanār

**Muttolḷāyiram:**

a post-classical text; contains 103 verses in the **veṇṇā** meter.

**Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar** (ca. thirteenth century A.D.):

a traditional commentator on the **Tolkāppiyam** and several other literary texts including the **kalittokai**, one of the poems in the anthology called the **eṭṭuttokai**.

**Naṇṇūl:**

a traditional grammar of Tamil; thirteenth/fourteenth century A.D.

**nāṇmaṇikkaṭikai**

a post-classical text; included in the **Paṭiṇeṇkīlkkāṇakku**

**Open syllable:**

a syllable which does not end with a consonant.

**“Optional”:**

what is otherwise known as “free variation.”

**Parimēlaḷakar** (ca. thirteenth century A.D.):

the earliest known commentator on the **paripāṭal**, one of the poems in the anthology called the **eṭṭuttokai**.

**Paṭiṇeṇkīlkkāṇakku**

an anthology of eighteen post-classical didactic poems

**Pērācīriyar** (ca. fourteenth century A.D.):

a traditional commentator on the **Tolkāppiyam** and some other literary works.

**Short syllable:**

a syllable which has a short vowel.

## 6 - Conventions

### Stem:

root + formative suffix; used in this study in synonymy with the term “root.”

### Suffix:

the last affix that is added to the right of a stem or another affix.

### Syllable:

a sequence of letters having one of the following patterns: (C)V(C)(C) and (C)∇(C)(C) where C is a consonant, V is a short vowel and ∇ is a long vowel. Examples are given below. Selected syllables illustrating some syllabic patterns are given in bold type. The syllabic pattern is given under column 3.

உயர்த்து	உ - யர்த் - து (u-yart-tu)	V-CVCC-CV
உரைக்கல்லாதவர்	உ - ரைக் - கல் - லா - த - வர் (u-raik-kal-lā-ta-var)	V-C∇C-CVC-C∇-CV-CVC
சேர்த்தி	சேர்த் - தி (cērt-ti)	C∇CC-CV

Permissible consonant clusters are rule-governed. See “Phonology.”

### Syllable with a closing consonant:

a syllable which ends with a consonant; a syllable of the pattern (C)VC or (C)∇C(C). Examples are given below. The syllable with a closing consonant is given in bold type. The syllabic pattern is given under column 3.

அங் - கு	aṅ - ku	VC-CV
----------	---------	-------

அ - டங் - கு	a-ṭaṅ-ku	V-CVC-CV
ஆட் - டு	āṭ-tu	VC-CV
இ - றைஞ் - சு	i-ṛaiñ-cu	V-CVC-CV
ஊழ்த் - து	ūḷt-tu	VCC-CV
காட் - டு	kāṭ-tu	CVC-CV
நல் - கு	nal-ku	CVC-CV
வீழ்த் - து	vīḷt-tu	CVCC-CV

#### Tolkāppiyam:

the first extant traditional grammar of Tamil; written in Tamil and applicable to classical Tamil poetry; pre-fifth century A.D.

#### Traditional grammars:

grammars of Tamil written in Tamil from before or the beginning of the Christian era up to the nineteenth century. These grammars do not follow the Latin model of grammatical description used by Western missionaries from the sixteenth century on.

#### Yāpparuṅkalakkārikai (tenth century A.D.):

also known as kārikai; a medieval treatise on Tamil prosody.

#### 5. The anthologies as sources for this study:

Only published material which is reliable and widely accepted was used for the study, not the palm-leaf manuscripts. The editions by U.V. Saminathier, S. Vaiyapurippillai, and the South India Tirunelveli Saiva Siddhantha Publishing Works were used. Variant readings of words/phrases in the poems were also taken into consideration.

#### 6. Punctuation:

The system recommended by the Modern Language Association (MLA) is followed, with some exceptions: e.g., selected Tamil words and a few other words are given in bold type in order to focus the attention.



## 8 - Conventions

### 7. Tamil Script:

Modern Tamil script is used in this study. However, the recently introduced reformed scheme of writing is not adopted mainly for the reason that the books of classical Tamil poems referred to in this study do not follow that scheme. Therefore, for example, the “reformed” கை is written in this study as கை; கை is written as கை, etc.

## SECTION 1



## INTRODUCTION

### Tamil

Tamil (தமிழ்), one of the two classical languages of India, is the only language in that country which has continued to exist for over two thousand years. It is spoken today by approximately 65 million people living mainly in southern India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia, Africa, Fiji, the West Indies, Mauritius and Reunion Islands, United Kingdom, United States, and Canada. It is the pre-eminent member of the Dravidian language family and has one of the longest unbroken literary traditions of any living language in the world. Dravidian is one of the four language groups represented now by about 100 million speakers in India, the other three groups being Munda, Tibeto-Chinese, and Indo-Aryan. The major Dravidian languages are Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, and Kannada, each of which has its own script system and highly sophisticated literature.

## Classical Tamil

As the classical language of peninsular India, Tamil has produced a unique world class literature which belongs to its classical period (pre-fifth/sixth century A.D.). This literature is known as the **caṅkam** (= Sangam) literature and the language it reflects is “classical Tamil.” The qualifier, “classical,” here is relative in the sense that the qualified, “Tamil,” is still thriving, now in the form of “modern Tamil.” Between the two extremities, “classical” and “modern,” one can discuss post-classical, medieval, and pre-modern periods spanning about two millennia, and their uninterrupted production of literatures and grammars.

The **caṅkam** literature, also called the **caṅkam** classics or classical Tamil poems, actually refer to two large compilations of numerous individual poems, the **eṭṭuttokai** (‘the eight anthologies’) and the **pattuppāṭṭu** (‘the ten songs’).<sup>1</sup> These poems, which originated from an oral bardic tradition, are believed to have been written down on palm-leaf manuscripts between the second century B.C. and the fourth to fifth century A.D. Attributed to 473 poets, the total number of these poems is 2,381, the shortest of which is 3 lines long (e.g., *aṅkurunūru* 121) and the longest, 782 (*maturaikkāñci*). Altogether, they add up to approximately 50,000 lines, most of which contain four metrical feet, known by the term **cīr**, per line and a few containing two, three or five, and rarely six. The metrics of these poems is discussed in “Theory of Classical Tamil Poetry.”

It is significant that classical Tamil literature evidences the indigenous linguistic, literary, and cultural traditions of southern India. Moreover, this body of literature is the only source for gaining a fair knowledge of a pre-Indo-Aryanized southern India. These poems employ unique literary conventions to express sentiments such as clandestine love, marital fidelity,

---

<sup>1</sup> For detailed introductions to these works, see Ramanujan (1985:ix-xiv) and Zvelebil (1975:5-21, 89-107).

jealousy, and pride and to celebrate such themes as war, philanthropy, royal patronage, and philosophy. More importantly, traces of the ancient Tamil country's contact with the rest of the world, cultural diffusion within India, origins of Tamil urbanization, local kingdoms, and devotion to personal gods ("bhakti") can all be discerned from these poems. Therefore, it is not surprising that Western scholars of classical Tamil literature have shown that it merits a place of importance within India and among world literature, while students of history and culture state that Tamil-speaking people have made major contributions to the development of Indian civilization. It is certainly not an overstatement when Ramanujan (1985:ix) astutely comments that not to know this poetry "is not to know a unique and major poetic achievement of Indian civilization."

Classical Tamil poems are the earliest extant linguistic documents of Tamil and contain the oldest attestations of Dravidian words. Furthermore, a preliminary survey of later texts with the formal properties of classical Tamil poetry as points of reference clearly demonstrates that a good understanding of the language employed in the latter will facilitate one's understanding of later Tamil in general, and later Tamil poetry in particular. Thus, in the final analysis, a study of classical Tamil becomes crucial for a thorough and complete understanding of the cultural spectrum of India and for a better understanding of the languages and literatures of the world.

### The Study of Classical Tamil in the Past

Due to historical circumstances, a knowledge of classical Tamil poetry suffered a setback in the Tamil country which produced it. The poems had to be interpreted for the benefit of those who wanted to study them, and therefore there arose several commentaries on them. The most popular traditional commentator on these poems, U.V. Saminathier, explains how these secular poems were rescued from oblivion and studied in the

nineteenth century after they had been stigmatized as irreligious along with certain other literary works.<sup>2</sup> Even after their rediscovery, the study of these poems demanded special training in the twentieth century since the language had changed considerably between the time of their composition and the time of their rebirth. In addition, the interpretations of these poems which were provided by medieval commentators and followed by the commentators of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had been influenced by post-classical and medieval Tamil and also by non-Tamil traditions. Consequently, the combination of language change in the form of loss of lexical items, formative changes in old words, semantic change, and the complexity in the narrative style of the commentaries made many classical Tamil poems difficult and enigmatic and sometimes gave a distorted view of the poems and of the language itself. Actually, this situation deserves a separate study. One could obtain abundant information on this matter just by comparing classical Tamil poems with their commentaries, while keeping them carefully apart. Here, a few examples might help a motivated reader appreciate the predicament of the commentators who had to labor over damaged palm-leaf manuscripts in order to revive these poems and their old commentaries and the consequences of such painstaking efforts.

(a) Many classical Tamil words have been categorically treated as “sound fillers” or “particles” by the commentators, perhaps because those words had become obsolete by their time. The term they use to refer to these words is *acai*. *kurai* is one such word which can very well be interpreted to mean ‘quality, nature, characteristic, attribute.’ Examples of the usage of this word are given in “The Particles” in this study. Another such word is *āṅka* which could be understood to mean ‘thus, in that manner.’ Even in those contexts where this word ought to be treated as a certain type of metrical foot (*corcīr*) in a poem so as to be combined with

---

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ramanujan (1985:xi-xiv).

the next line to make sense and to be noted by the prosodic term **vaḷi-y-acai** 'leading metrical unit', most commentators label them just as an **acai** which has lead to the incorrect interpretation of it as a meaningless sound filler.<sup>3</sup> See "The Particles" for examples of its usage.

Actually, the various items which are labelled as "**acai**" by traditional commentators do have significant semantic and prosodic functions in classical Tamil poetry. Perhaps, students of classical Tamil poetry should begin to understand the term "**acai**" (as used by the commentators) as referring to the basic metrical unit **acai**, rather than as a nonsensical sound filler. The commentators' cryptic usage of the term "**acai**," instead of specifying **urai-y-acai**, **oḷi-y-acai**, or **vaḷi-y-acai**, each of which has a specific prosodic function, has mislead many in the past to the under-estimation of classical Tamil diction.

(b) Sometimes a word appears in classical Tamil in more than one form and one of the reasons seems to be that the form with an extra suffix can serve as a metrical foot (**cīr**) whereas the form without that suffix cannot. For example, the form **vaṇṭal** is longer than **vaṇṭu** and both mean 'sediment/deposit/soil'.<sup>4</sup> The form **vaṇṭal** (**vaṇṭu** 'to collect, gather' + **al** verbal noun suffix) is a metrical foot of the pattern **nēr-nēr** while **vaṇṭu** is of the pattern **nērupu** and rarely occurs as a metrical foot in this period. The classical Tamil poet must have had a choice between these two forms, **vaṇṭu** and **vaṇṭal**, when he wanted to say something about the sediment/deposit/soil.

Nevertheless, the traditional commentator U.V. Saminathier interprets **vaṇṭu** as 'bees' instead of 'deposit/soil' as it is used in a classical Tamil

---

<sup>3</sup> We do find the commentaries referring to the form **āṇku** as a refrain when it occurs as refrain (**kūṇ**): cf. the Old Commentary on *pati.26:4*. Even in such instances, **āṇku** 'thus, there, in that manner' could be understood as a meaningful word functioning as refrain.

<sup>4</sup> The form **vaṇṭal** 'sediment/deposit' is just an extension of **vaṇṭu**. One may also note that the word **vaṇṭu** 'deposit' is related to **maṇṭu** which means 'to collect like sediment.'



poem: **vaṇṭu** mēmpaṭūum i-v-vaṇa-nilai āru ‘this cruel/bad river where the bees are overwhelming’ (*pura.263:4*). Then he notes that **vaṇṭu** could also refer to a group of warriors. In this context **vaṇṭu** neither means ‘bees’ nor does it refer to a group of warriors. It refers to the deposit in the river bed, and therefore the line under question means ‘this drying up river (**vaṇa nilai āru**) where its sediment/deposit/soil (**vaṇṭu**) is coming up (mēmpaṭūum).’<sup>5</sup>

Apparently, the entire Old Commentary on this poem was not available to Saminathier through damaged palm leaf manuscripts, so he had two choices: one was to understand the word **vaṇṭu** in its more common usage as “bees” and the other was to associate it with the name of a person, **Vaṇṭan**, which is used in another classical poem (*pati.31:22-23*): celvattu **vaṇṭan** aṇaiyai ‘You are like the wealthy **Vaṇṭan**.’ Unfortunately, it would seem that the usage **vaṇṭal** ‘deposit’ from other poems has escaped Saminathier’s attention (e.g., *pari.6:18*) or that he was expecting the form **vaṇṭal** instead of **vaṇṭu** if it had to mean ‘deposit.’ Other commentators follow Saminathier’s path. If these later commentators expected the form **vaṇṭal** instead of **vaṇṭu** to mean ‘sediment/deposit in a river bed’, it would only tell us that the contemporary form of the word had affected their understanding of the word in an earlier form in earlier poems.

(c) One crucial example will suffice to see how semantic or cultural change has colored the understanding of classical Tamil poems. The word **karpu** is understood today as meaning ‘chastity/marital fidelity (of a wom-

---

<sup>5</sup> There is no doubt that one of the words for bees is **vaṇṭu**. One could make a semantic connection between **vaṇṭu** ‘bees’ which swarm and **vaṇṭu** ‘sediment/deposit’ which collects in a river bed. However, in the context of the poem under consideration, **vaṇṭu** could not mean ‘bees’, for the poem talks about a fallen hero who brought back a herd of stolen cattle through the drying up river. It is quite unlikely that the cattle moved through a river full of water or that bees were overwhelming in a river that was drying up.

an).’ It need not be, perhaps should not be, interpreted to mean ‘chastity of a woman’ in classical Tamil poems. This word is derived from **kal** ‘to learn by experience, to have maturity’ + **pu** verbal noun suffix, and is used in these poems, in connection with male, female, and even neuter things like words of (Vedic) chanting: cf. *elutā k karpu-in̄ nin̄ col* ‘your words of learning which are not written down’ (*kurū.156:5*).

However, the way in which modern commentators interpret this word in classical Tamil poems arouses curiosity about a possible bias reflecting change in socio-cultural values by their time. When the word **karpu** occurs in these poems with reference to a woman, the commentators do not interpret it. Rather, they simply repeat the word **karpu** in their commentary.<sup>6</sup> But, when it occurs with reference to a man or a neuter object like words, they do not hesitate to interpret it as ‘learning/education’ (**kalvi**) in the modern sense of the word **kalvi**.<sup>7</sup> Earlier commentators, perhaps confused about the term because both **karpu** and **kalvi** are derived from the same stem **kal**, clearly avoided any interpretation other than ‘learning’ (**kalvi**) when the word occurred with reference to a man.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Saminathier’s commentary on *pati.90:49*.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Saminathier’s commentaries on *pati.43:31*, *pati.80:17*, and *kurū.156:5*. Faithfully following the Old Commentary, Saminathier even notes that *elutā-k-karpu* (*kurū.156:5*) means ‘education through learning the utterances that are not written down; that is to know (about) the Vedas’ (“*elutā k kiḷaviyai k karpa kalvi; atāvatu vētam uṇartal*”).

Note that there is just one occurrence of the word **kalvi** ‘education’ in classical Tamil: *kalviyeṇ eṇṇum val āṇ ciṇāṇ* ‘the skillful young male child who claims “I have learning/education”’ (*puṛa.346:3*). It can also be noted that when the stem **kal** occurs in a negative form **kallā**, commentators do not make any special mention of it (cf. the Old Commentary on *pati.48:7*) or interpret it as meaning ‘not learning the traditional job’ (cf. Saminathier’s commentary on *kurū.69:3*; Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar’s commentary on *malai:312*).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the Old Commentary on *pati.43:31*, where the commentator remarks about the word **karpu** in the phrase *tolaityā k karpa*: “It is said **karpa**, because it means ‘You who

What makes this analysis more interesting is that later century commentators like U.V. Saminathier were fairly and unmistakably influenced by their predecessors. In this particular case, one can trace the treatment of the word **karpu** (as ‘chastity of a woman’) back to one medieval commentator, Aṭiyārkkunallār, who makes a clear distinction between two types of **karpu** as **āriya karpu** and **cīriya karpu** or **ara-k-karpu** and **maṛa-k-karpu** referring to the behavioral patterns of two women who figure in a post-classical Tamil text and conduct themselves in very different ways at the loss of their husbands.<sup>9</sup> In effect, **āriya karpu** and **ara-k-karpu** mean the same, while **cīriya karpu** and **maṛa-k-karpu** mean the same. According to this commentator, it would seem, **āriya karpu** or **ara-k-karpu** refers to the subservient, docile, and gentle behavior of a woman, whereas **cīriya karpu** or **maṛa-k-karpu** refers to the wild behavior of an outraged woman. Whatever the significance of this commentator’s interpretation, one wonders why later commentators should use the same interpretation for the word **karpu** even when they explain classical Tamil poetry.<sup>10</sup>

---

have kalvi.’ They also say something else.” (“**karpu** eṇṇatu kalviyai uṭaiyāy eṇṇavāru. piṇṇitum uraiṇṇa”).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Aṭiyārkkunallār’s commentary quoted in Venkatasamy Nattar’s commentary on *cilappatikāram*, *patikam*:42.

<sup>10</sup> Saminathier’s interpretation of the phrase **āriya karpu** as used in *pati*.90:49 is worth a note, where he quotes Aṭiyārkkunallār without even translating the phrase **āriya karpu** which could be understood as ‘undisturbed/profound learning/maturity’ in the context of the poem. Further, he seems to emphasize that the reference to men in terms of their kinship to a woman is due to the woman’s **karpu**. See Saminathier’s commentary on *pati*.65:10, where he says that the Cēra king is addressed as **cēyilai kaṇava** ‘Husband of the woman (the queen) wearing red ornaments!’ because of the eminence of the queen’s **karpu**.

He adds a remark in this context that **Aiyai** is another woman with **karpu** and that her father **Aṭtai** is referred to as ‘**Aiyai**’s father’, because of **Aiyai**’s **karpu**. But in fact, classical Tamil poems do not contain any information about the character of this woman **Aiyai**. The commentators introduce her as a woman with **karpu**.

Even more interesting is how the phrases **āriya karpu/ara-k-karpu** and **cīriya karpu/mara-k-karpu** are understood today by modern Tamils respectively as ‘the chastity of a subservient woman’ and ‘the chastity of a wild, warrior-like woman’, because of the semantic function of the word **karpu** as ‘a woman’s chastity.’ This modern understanding of the word **karpu** would be fine as long as the same meaning is not imposed on its earliest usage in classical Tamil poems. Unfortunately, that does not seem to be the case.<sup>11</sup>

Here, readers may note that both **karpu (kal + pu)** and **kalvi (kal + vi)** are derived from the same stem **kal** ‘to learn, mature’ and respectively mean ‘acquiring profundity’ and ‘acquiring traditional skills’ in classical Tamil poetry; and that at some point in time, ‘male profundity/learning’ (man’s **karpu**) was separated from the overall semantic realm of ‘profundity/learning’ (**karpu**) to be equated with acquiring traditional skills or education (**kalvi**), whereas ‘female profundity/learning’ (woman’s **karpu**) was restricted to mean ‘chastity.’ Naturally, commentators impose this later semantic structure on classical Tamil poetry.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> In the Tamil tradition of learning and writing, it is normal not only to repeat the subject matter treated by earlier authors, but also to cherish like gold the very words spoken by those authors: **munṇōr moli poruḷē anri avar moliyum ponnē pōl pōrruvam** (Naṇṇūl, Rule 9). The many accounts given in some traditional commentaries about how texts were learned in pre-modern times tell us that the student learning a text more or less served as a medium for receiving the text from his teacher and transmitting it to the next generation of students. This mode of learning a text and imparting it to others must have demanded a rigid and loyal system of cherishing verbatim what was being learned. It is only fair that modern education and scholarship bear the vestige of the pre-modern system of cherishing the words of earlier authors.

<sup>12</sup> It may be noted that Subramanya Bharatiyar, a modern Tamil poet, was the first one to suggest that **karpu** ‘chastity, marital fidelity’ should be a quality that should be common to both men and women: **karpu nilai eṇṇu colla vantār iru katicckum annilai potuvil vaippōm**. Loosely translated, it means, ‘They talk about **karpu**. Let us keep that state as common to

(d) As for the narrative style of the commentators, the most striking aspects must be mentioned. Their prose, apparently influenced by Sanskrit, was overly braided with passive voice and causative constructions which only complicated the Tamil and perhaps affected later analyses of classical Tamil poems in the twentieth century. For example, a medieval commentator, Nacciṇārkkkiṇiyar, translates *nīṭi* 'getting long; having gotten long' as *vaḷara-p-paṭṭu* and *viḷai* 'growing' as *viḷaiya-p-paṭukinra*.<sup>13</sup> The forms *vaḷara-p-paṭṭu* and *viḷaiya-p-paṭukinra* are constructions using the passive voice which are not needed for Tamil and are untranslatable into sensible English ('experiencing the growth' and 'that which experiences sprouting/growth?'). This commentator glosses *ūṭṭi* 'feeding ...; fed and ...' as *uṇṇa-p-paṇṇuvittu*.<sup>14</sup> The form *uṇṇa-p-paṇṇuvittu* literally translates as 'making X make Y eat' because *uṇṇa-p-paṇṇu* is already causative/effec-tive, meaning 'make X eat'; the addition of the suffix *vi* adds another degree of causation to it, thus making *uṇṇa-p-paṇṇu-vi* mean 'make X make Y eat'; *uṇṇa-p-paṇṇuvittu* is the adverbial participle form of *uṇṇa-p-paṇṇu-vi*.

---

both the parties (male and female).'

The commentators' treatment of the word *karpu* reveals to us that the word has a semantic history. This history tells us that the word has suffered a semantic reduction in its life to refer only to 'female profundity/learning' leading to its modern understanding and usage as 'chastity; marital fidelity, especially of a woman.' Semantic shift or change of lexical items is nothing unusual, especially in a culture which is thousands of years old. It may not always be possible to trace the semantic history of lexical items, but ignoring the existence of such history may be detrimental to one's understanding of a people's history in other respects. Therefore, it is the duty of future scholars, especially of cultural historians, to identify, understand, and resolve ambiguities of this kind so that classical Tamil poems and later Tamil works are understood in their proper perspective, and that Tamil culture through Tamil literature is also properly appreciated.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Nacciṇārkkkiṇiyar's commentary on *matu*:288, 291.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Nacciṇārkkkiṇiyar's commentary on *peru*:479.

An example from another commentary illustrates a style that was apparently influenced by the Sanskrit quotative marker *iti* 'that ...; thus ... .' Notice how the following Tamil sentence ends with the word *āru* 'thus; in that manner', here unnecessary: *tamar uṭaṇ cenṇuḷi aṇci viṭuttuc cellumātaḷiṇ avaṇuṇun tōlvi kāṇṭal ilipeṇpatu koṇṭu ataṇaik kāṇumāru vaitta kūṇru enṇavāru*.<sup>15</sup> Here, the reader needs only to know that the form *enṇavāru* means the same as *enṇratu* 'what X said' which is simpler and more akin to classical as well as later Tamil sentence structure.

### Revival of the Study of Classical Tamil

As a result of the problems outlined above, there emerged a polarity between classical Tamil poems and their readers in early twentieth century, in spite of the indispensable help provided by the commentators. Nonetheless, the study of these poems continued because of their literary importance.

Fortunately, Western contact with southern India introduced the study of classical Tamil to the Western world and revitalized it in India.<sup>16</sup> Western scholars of the late twentieth century have produced excellent works on classical Tamil, and future scholars will have a tremendous technological advantage not available to medieval and later traditional commentators when they labored over damaged palm-leaf manuscripts to revive these poems.<sup>17</sup> There is then the likelihood that the study of

---

<sup>15</sup> Pinnattur Narayanasamy Aiyar's Commentary on *narṇṇai* 271.

<sup>16</sup> The Tamil world is indebted to outstanding scholars like George L. Hart, John Marr, A.K. Ramanujan, and Kamil Zvelebil, who were pioneers and continue to be instrumental in the study of classical Tamil in the West.

<sup>17</sup> My own research on classical Tamil poetry has been greatly benefited by the unique combination of my traditional Tamil training, Western linguistic training, and modern computing technology.

classical Tamil poetry will take on a new face in the forthcoming centuries, building on the crucial contributions of traditional commentators.<sup>18</sup>

### The Need for a Systematic Analysis of Tamil

Traditional grammars written in Tamil by Tamils date from the beginning of the Christian era through the twentieth century. Commentaries in Tamil on these grammars are also available beginning ca. the tenth century A.D. Based on a Latin model, Western Missionary grammars of Tamil started to emerge in the sixteenth century, and were written in Portuguese, Dutch, French, Italian, and English. With the introduction of Western education and modern linguistics into the Tamil country in the twentieth century, Tamil scholars wrote descriptions of Tamil in Tamil and English that addressed various issues. Other scholars, from the West and Japan, have also contributed much to the analysis of Tamil. Nevertheless, no systematic, rigorous, and comprehensive analysis of the Tamil language as it developed over time is available.<sup>19</sup>

### The Project and This Volume

Drawing upon concepts and methods of Western linguistics, I am currently engaged in a systematic study of Tamil literary texts from the

---

<sup>18</sup> The freer the mind is from later Tamil and non-Dravidian languages, the closer it will get to the Tamil of the classical period.

<sup>19</sup> Zvelebil (1967:8) remarks: "In Tamil, we have nothing to compare with the pioneer work of Gai and Narasimhia in Kannada and Chandra Sekhar in Malayalam. The only possible exception is T.P. Meenakshisundaram's *A History of Tamil Language*, DCPRI, Poona, 1965."

As this volume was nearing completion, I came to know of a description of classical Tamil, entitled *Caṅkattamil*, written in Tamil by S. Agasthalingom in Tamilnadu, India. The complete version of this book is not yet available to me.

earliest period known for Tamil literary documentation (ca. 150 B.C.) up to the sixteenth century A.D., which marks the arrival of the Westerners in the Tamil country. For this ongoing project, Tamil poetry, prose, and inscriptions from the earliest period until the sixteenth century A.D. are being entered into an Apple Macintosh computer. The plan is to create a historical reference grammar of pre-modern Tamil in four sequential volumes; this volume is the first in the series.<sup>20</sup>

This volume is not intended to discuss the development of grammatical theories in Tamil. A discussion of the development of grammatical theories would involve not only a survey of all literary texts down the centuries, but also of analyses of these texts done at different times by various scholars, Tamil, non-Tamil, ancient, and modern. Such an analysis is not within the scope of this volume.

The present volume is limited to providing a reference tool for understanding the structure of Tamil employed in classical Tamil poetry. This study takes the language of this poetry as a given, and treats it as a benchmark with reference to which the language of subsequent centuries can be described systematically. Distinct changes in the Tamil language surface after the period of this poetry. Slow and steady contact with Indo-Aryan languages over the centuries has introduced several changes in pre-modern Tamil and therefore it would be worthwhile to study the language structure and change over four successive stages of language history: Stage 1 — classical period or the **caṅkam** period (150 B.C.-pre-fifth/sixth century), Stage 2 — post-classical period (pre-seventh century), Stage 3 — medieval period (seventh-twelfth centuries), and Stage 4 — pre-modern period (twelfth-fifteenth centuries).

---

<sup>20</sup> What is here intended by a “reference grammar” is explained later in this chapter under “How to use this volume.” See “Methodology” for information on the computing aspect of the project.



The method employed in this volume is essentially synchronic and descriptive. Historical notes about the language are purely incidental. Later volumes will treat the substantial linguistic changes between classical Tamil and the Tamil reflected in later texts. In short, this is a descriptive grammar, not prescriptive. That is to emphasize that it is not responsible for generating and experimenting with hypothetical utterances in Tamil.

The contents of this volume are presented in eight sections. Section 1 contains general information that is assumed in the rest of the volume. Section 2 consists of chapters about nouns, noun-like items, and those items which are added to or derived from nominal stems. Section 3 is about various kinds of verb stems. Section 4 deals with finite verbs and nouns derived from verb stems. Section 5 is devoted to the participles. Section 6 is about the various modes of expression. Section 7 includes information on the verbs *ā* 'to be' and *āṇ* 'to be content', verb modifiers, and figures of speech. The penultimate chapter in this section contains notes on miscellaneous items. The last chapter, "Analysis of A Few Poems," illustrates how different parts of a poem are grammatically connected. Section 8, "Appendix," provides a detailed index of pronouns, case markers, postpositions, particles, and other affixes with reference to their occurrence in the volume.<sup>21</sup>

The chapters in these various sections first give a general description of the given concept, next say how the concept under discussion is linguistically derived, and then provide a variety of examples from classical Tamil poetry.<sup>22</sup> The general descriptions of grammatical concepts are

---

<sup>21</sup> A glossary of classical Tamil stems is under way. In the meantime the reader is requested to use the following: (i) The *Dravidian Etymological Dictionary* by Burrow and Emeneau and (ii) The *Tamil Lexicon* published by Madras University.

<sup>22</sup> In spite of their excellent explanation of rules of grammar, one major inadequacy found in the traditional commentaries on Tamil grammars is that they do not always provide complete reference to the sources of their examples. On many occasions the reader does

brief in many instances. The examples represent all the types and shapes of stems such as nominal, verbal, monosyllabic, non-monosyllabic, vowel-final, and consonant-final. The translations of the examples are deliberately literal and functional, not poetic at all. They may sound odd in some instances for several reasons: the examples had to be pulled out of context; ideas are expressed differently in classical Tamil and in modern English; and more importantly, one has to have at least a minimal understanding of classical Tamil literary conventions to see what they mean. The translations are basically concerned at helping the reader see how exactly the various grammatical forms are used in a poem. In every instance, accuracy is aimed at the particular grammatical form under discussion. The meanings for the words were obtained basically from the context of the poem under consideration and by cross checking their usage in other poems.

### How to Use This Volume

One does not have to be a trained linguist or knowledgeable about traditional Tamil grammars in order to use this volume, but it is assumed that the reader has a basic understanding of grammar in a broad sense; that the reader is not puzzled by usages like “case” in a grammatical sense or “clause,” or “participle.” It has also been assumed that the reader has at least a minimal knowledge of Tamil. The information provided about traditional Tamil grammars and commentaries need not distract the readers from their main concern.

This volume is meant to be a “reference tool,” not a text book, and therefore does not guide one to generate Tamil sentences. Nor does it provide declensions of nouns and paradigms of verbs. It is a tool to aid the study of classical Tamil and refers the reader to the various contexts in

---

not have good examples or does not know their sources.

which given grammatical forms are actually used in a poem. One can use it in two different ways: (i) to use it much like a dictionary where a reader can look up the definition or meaning of an item;<sup>23</sup> (ii) to read through from the beginning and get an introduction to classical Tamil poetry.

For the “dictionary” use of the volume, one has to start with the “Appendix,” which contains lists of items with reference to their occurrence in the volume, and then proceed to specific chapters. Here, a reader could ask what a particular suffix stands for or what the grammatical function of a particular form of a word in classical Tamil is, and so on.

For the “read through” use of the volume, one needs to read all the chapters which provide introductory notes to given grammatical concepts (e.g., “A Note On Participles”) and the discussions under headings such as “General” and “Formation,” but can overlook many examples. Readers have a choice in the last chapter, “Analysis of A Few Poems.” Some very elementary details about classical Tamil poems are provided first in this chapter and may be passed by an experienced reader. Motivated readers may glance through the analysis of the first poem (*aiṅkuṟunūru* 423), which is quite simple, and may read through the analysis of the second poem (*puṟanāṇūru* 278), which is slightly complex. The analysis of the last poem (*akanāṇūru* 9) is intended for patient readers whose attention span will be challenged by the complexity of the poem and its demanding analysis. In each of these three cases, the poem is translated in three ways. A unit-by-unit translation and paraphrase are provided to show how the various words and phrases in the poem are connected. As a treat for the reader, a poetic translation is also provided to demonstrate how the poem is transformed elegantly when it passes through the grammarian’s

---

<sup>23</sup> Here, the reader must keep in mind that linguistic items normally undergo semantic and functional changes over the centuries and therefore one must not impose modern Tamil usage of an item on its classical Tamil usage.

workshop and rests in a poet's gallery.<sup>24</sup>

The simplest of the three poems analyzed in the last chapter is given here basically to introduce classical Tamil poetry to the reader. The last chapter contains a detailed grammatical analysis of this poem (*aiṅkurunūru* 423).

மாமழை இடியுடத் தளிசொரிந் தன்றே	māmaḷai iṭiyūut taḷicorin taṇṇē
வாணுதல் பசப்பச் செலவயர்ந் தனையே	vāṇutal pacappac celavayarn taṇaiyē
யாமே நிறுறுந் தமையலம்	yāmē niṇṇuran tamaiyalam
ஆய்மல ருண்கணு நீர்நிறைந் தனவே	āymala ruṇkaṇu nīrṇirain taṇavē

Paraphrase from the grammarian's workshop:

*The thundering dark cloud has poured raindrops, indeed —  
But you have undertaken a journey as (your lover's) bright forehead  
has turned pale (due to the anxiety of separation)  
Whereas, we (your lover and I, her female companion) cannot be  
calm, separated from you  
The seductive eyes (of your lover), which (now) resemble fading  
flowers, are filled with tears.*

Transformation in the poet's gallery<sup>25</sup>:

*Dark clouds,  
thundering,  
let loose their rain:  
her bright forehead has gone pale*

<sup>24</sup> The poetic translations are by David D. Shulman, A.K. Ramanujan, and George L. Hart.

<sup>25</sup> This translation is by David D. Shulman.

*now that you're to go away.  
Still, we haven't deserted you.  
No peace for us  
any more.  
Deadly eyes  
fading like flowers.  
are flooded with tears.*

## METHODOLOGY

### The Approach

An account of the process by which this book grew will give the reader some insight into its current form. First, I entered all the anthologies (classical Tamil poems) in modern Tamil script into an Apple Macintosh computer. For example, the first line of *kuruntokai* 2 was entered as follows: கொங்கு தேர் வாழ்க்கை அம் சிறைத் தும்பி. Then I analyzed the poems composed by certain poets, Kautamaṇār, Vāṇmikiyār, Mārkaṇṭēyar, and Murañciyūr Muṭinākarāyar.<sup>1</sup> While visually scanning these poems, I noted down grammatical categories like *aḷapeṭai* ‘lengthening of sounds’ and adjectival/relative participle that seemed necessary to explain the formation of classical Tamil words. In selecting these categories, I considered the systems of categorization developed by traditional Tamil grammarians

---

<sup>1</sup> This choice and subsequent selections of the anthologies were based on Zvelebil’s account of “a relative and absolute chronology” of classical Tamil poetry. See Zvelebil 1975:107.

and Western missionaries who wrote grammars of Tamil during the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries A.D. A blend of these two systems was deemed helpful to explain the basic structure of classical Tamil. Computer software that would efficiently perform the tasks required for the type of analysis needed for this study could not be found — hence, the visual scanning — and, at that time, the experienced human eye, although not perfect, was more useful than the electronic eye in searching for the required items. A computer printout of these poems, however, made the search much easier than it would have been otherwise.<sup>2</sup>

Next, I analyzed the anthology known as the *patirruppattu* and selected additional grammatical categories as they became necessary. By then, the survey covered the poems up to A.D. 200. At this point it seemed worthwhile to survey all the anthologies, so I started with the anthology *puranāṇūru* and then moved to other works.

The number of grammatical categories necessary to explain the structure of words and phrases in these poems grew as the number of the anthologies surveyed increased, while the complexity of those categories developed as the search proceeded from anthology to anthology. To be specific, *paripāṭal* and *kalittokai* provided the most elaborate versions of the grammatical categories compared to *kuruntokai* or any other anthology. Thus, the anthologies *in toto* gave a sense of direction and magnitude to the analysis. Hypotheses were formed, then verified or discarded as the survey continued. The verified hypotheses are given in the present volume.

---

<sup>2</sup> MicroSoft's Word was sufficient in the early stages of the project to search for required words and phrases. Later, a program in Turbo Pascal was written to retrieve all instances of a required word from all the anthologies.

## The Direction

In forming and verifying or discarding the hypotheses, I deliberated over the analyses of classical Tamil done by modern scholars and traditional Tamil grammarians and commentators. In the end, the description that would eventually enable me to explain later developments in the language in terms of classical Tamil seemed to be the most attractive. I have tried also not to make too many assumptions while explaining the grammatical forms.

My approach to the problem differs from that of the traditional commentators basically in terms of its direction. A few examples are given here.<sup>3</sup>

(a) Traditional commentators on classical Tamil poems tend to explain earlier forms of words which occur in these poems in terms of contemporary forms, naturally. For example, they construe the form **accu** 'fear' as the corrupted form of **accam** and call it **kaṭai-k-kurai** 'shortening of the final (am).'<sup>4</sup> Similarly, **ceruki** is said to appear as **cerii** 'inserting, having inserted', **maruvi** is said to occur as **marii** 'joining', **orūi** 'moving away' is considered to be a "changed form (of **oruvi**)," **tārā** is said to have shortened as **tarā** 'without providing', **kuṭa malai** 'western mountain' is glossed as **kuṭaka malai**, **muḷārai** 'drum-like trunk' is understood as a "changed form (of **muḷāvarai**)" and **taṭaii** 'having bent' is explained with reference to **taṭavu** 'bending.'<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> When relevant in this study, I have also pointed out how my approach differs from the analyses done by modern scholars.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Parimēlaḷakar's commentary on *pari.3:33* and Saminathier's commentary on *pati.90:2*.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Saminathier's commentaries on *kuṟu.92:4*; *72:5*; *pati.13:27*; the Old Commentary on *pati.13:23*; Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar's commentary on *malai:527*; Saminathier's commentary on *pati.pati.5:14*, and Pinnattur Narayanasamy Aiyar's commentary on *naṟṟ.80:6*.



Most of these forms do occur in classical Tamil: **accu** (*pati.90:2*), **accam** (*kuṟu.392:2*); **cerīi** (*kuṟu.295:1*); **marīi** (*peru.383*), **maruvi** (*matu.541*); **orīi** (*pati.13:27*); **tarā** (*pati.13:23*), **tārā** (*puṟa.157:3*); **kuṭa** (*malai.527*); **mulārai** (*pati.pati.5:14*), **mulāvarai** (*puṟa.85:7*); **taṭaii** (*narr.80:6*), and **taṭavu** (*peru.77*). **ceruki**, **oruvi**, and **kuṭaka** (*cilap.30:159*) are later forms. However, in each instance, the commentators keep the forms which must have survived in the language of their time as their points of reference in order to explain earlier forms. Thus, they are going backward from a later period toward an earlier one.

The approach of the commentators seems to lack the possibility of inferring how words developed from smaller into larger units. So, wherever possible in this study, I have used the shortest form of the stem without long vowels (e.g., **taṭa** ‘to bend’ instead of **taṭavu** ‘bending’; **muḷa** ‘drum’ instead of **mulā** ‘drum’) and have also tried to explain all the other forms derived from it. For example, I consider **añcu** ‘to fear’ as the bare verb stem from which the mutated stem **accu** ‘fear’ is derived which subsequently leads to the derivation of the verbal noun **accam** ‘fear’ by adding the suffix **am**. Similarly, I have taken the bare verb stem **kēḷ** ‘to hear, listen’ as the basic form from which the imperative/optative form **kēḷāy** ‘May you listen!’ is derived, whereas Tamil grammars and commentaries derive **kēḷ** from **kēḷāy**.<sup>6</sup> Similar derivations can be found throughout this study, especially in “Morphophonemics” and “Verbal nouns.”

The approach of starting from a smaller unit and proceeding toward a larger seemed to explain to me why there are two forms for a word to begin with. For example, it can be said that **accu** and **accam** provided the classical Tamil poet with two metrical possibilities. The former (**accu**) yields a certain basic prosodic unit (**nēṟpu acai**) whereas the latter (**accam**) yields a different and larger prosodic unit (**nēr-nēr**); **mulārai** is a metrical foot of one pattern (**nirai-nēr**) while **mulāvarai** is of a different pattern

---

<sup>6</sup> See “The Imperative/Optative” in this study.

(**nirai-nirai**). These different forms must have been useful in different meters, allowing for the poet's unrestricted usage of words in the language.

In addition, this approach helped me to see how words must have gotten longer gradually over time by the addition of glides and formative suffixes, since we see glides replacing vowel clusters in later Tamil: e.g., **muḷavarai** < **muḷa** 'drum' + **v** (glide) + **arai** 'trunk'; **kuṭaka** 'western' < **kuṭaku** < **kuṭa** 'west' + **ku** formative suffix.

Furthermore, this approach would encourage future scholars to prepare a lexicon with the shortest attested forms of the stems, which in turn would lead to a better understanding of the language in general and of these poems in particular. Normally and quite understandably, dictionaries that are available to the readers tend to use later forms (usually in their verbal noun structure) for citation purposes, so readers may not be able to see the connection between the dictionary form and the actual form used in poetry, especially the **caṅkam** classics. For example, the word **taṭavu** in modern Tamil means 'caress.' One can imagine the confusion that might arise when the reader has to connect the form **taṭavu** 'caress' from a dictionary to **taṭavu** 'bending' as given in traditional commentaries and subsequently to **taṭa** 'to bend' in classical Tamil. A historical lexicon would be cumbersome if the direction of approach is from **taṭavu** 'caress' going back to **taṭa** 'to bend', but would be greatly appreciated if it gradually traces the semantic connection between **taṭa** 'to bend' and **taṭavu** 'to caress' by moving forward.

(b) Medieval commentators on traditional Tamil grammars tend to consider various suffixes which function alike as derivatives of a single item. For example, Cēṇāvaraiyar considers the adverbial participle suffixes **i** and **y** as derivatives of the adverbial participle suffix **u**. He also considers the infinitive suffixes **ū** and **ā** to be the same.<sup>7</sup> I have treated these

---

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Cēṇāvaraiyar's commentary on Tolkāppiyam, collatikāram, Rule 228.

suffixes separately so that the readers get a broader view of their usage. Moreover, I consider the *ā* as distinct from *ū*.<sup>8</sup>

### The Language of Classical Tamil Poetry and the Approach

The poems surveyed belong to a stage of Tamil which may be termed “old Tamil” or “classical Tamil.” Tamil is normally considered as a language in which the simple sentence has its verb at the end preceded by the object and then the subject occurring at the beginning of the sentence.<sup>9</sup> This structure is not the norm in classical Tamil poetry. Sentence structure, whether simple or complex, here is greatly controlled by the poetic aspect of the language. Alliteration (*totai* ‘stringing’) seems to play a crucial role in holding the lines in a poem. Therefore, components like the subject, object, and verb occur anywhere in the sentence, depending upon the theme of the poem and what the poet wants to emphasize. For example, in *yāmē nin tuṟantu amaiyalam* ‘We cannot be calm, separated from you’ (*aiṅk.423:3*), the subject (*yām* ‘we’) is at the very beginning and the verb (*amaiyalam* ‘we cannot be calm’) is at the end. Now, consider *aliyaḷ eṇṇātu mā malai innum peyya muḷaṅki minnum ... eṇ in uyir kuṟittē* ‘The dark cloud, without thinking that I am to be pitied, aims at my life and roars with lightning in order to rain more’ (*kuṟu.216:5-7*). Here, the subject (*mā malai* ‘dark cloud’) is in the middle and the finite verb (*muḷaṅki minnum* ‘roars with lightening’) is also in the middle. Now, consider *tuyil tuṟantaṇavāl tōli eṇ kaṇṇē* ‘Friend, my eyes have given up sleep’ (*kuṟu.186:4*). Here, the subject (*kaṇ* ‘eyes’) is at the very end. It happens even if the poem is very long. To have a closer look at a long poem where the subject is at the very end, readers are encouraged

<sup>8</sup> See “The Non-Past Stem” for examples of *ā* and *ū* used as suffixes. See “A Note on the Verb *ā*” for the significance of *ā* as a separate suffix.

<sup>9</sup> Linguists would refer to it as an S(ubject) O(bject) V(erb) language.

to glance through the last poem (*akanāṇūru* 9) analyzed in the last chapter. I chose this poem especially for its beauty, depth, and complexity. In this poem which is 26 lines long, there is only one sentence with the finite verb occurring in line 23 and the subject as the very last word in the last line.

While the placement of the subject, object, and verb seems flexible, the order in which affixes are added to a stem is rigid. It can also be said that word order itself is rigid in certain cases: when a nominal marked for the genitive case, an adjective, or an adjectival participle precedes the noun it modifies; when certain verbal participles (adverbial participles and infinitives) precede the main verb in the same clause.<sup>10</sup>

Word formation *per se*, is very much influenced by the metrics of the poems. While the order is rigid with respect to adding suffixes to stems, certain meters (*pā*) like the *ācīriyam* tend to use shorter words and certain other meters like the *kali* tend to employ longer words: e.g., *ṇāyīru* 'sun' (*kuṟu.92:1*); *peyarttanen* 'I moved away' (*kuṟu.84:1*); *uraikkallātavar* 'one/those who cannot speak out' (*kali.61:4*).<sup>11</sup> Note that the last is the longest single word found in these poems.

The stage of Tamil in these poems clearly reflects at least four strata, spanning several centuries (ca. 150 B.C. - 500/600 A.D.?). In one stratum of the language, nominal or verbal stems without suffixes are used to perform various grammatical tasks. In the next stratum, which might be contemporaneous with the first, "stem mutation" is used as a technique for expressing various grammatical concepts.<sup>12</sup> In the third stratum, which

---

<sup>10</sup> See "Formation Mechanisms" for understanding the order followed when affixes are added to a stem. See "A Note on Participles" and "Analysis of a Few Poems" for more on word order and how different phrases within a poem are connected.

<sup>11</sup> See "Theory of Classical Tamil Poetry" for information on the relation between "word" and Tamil metrical syllable (*acai*) and metrical foot (*cīr*).

<sup>12</sup> The term "stem mutation" refers to the changes made in the shape of the stem. This term was adopted from Anttila (1972:153). See "Formation Mechanisms" for examples

might represent a contemporaneous or subsequent stage, numerous affixes appended to nominal and verbal stems are used to perform various grammatical functions.<sup>13</sup> In the fourth stratum, which might represent the final development of the language of this period, one finds used: (a) more than one affix to denote one grammatical notion and *vice versa*; (b) one derived form to signify more than one grammatical concept; and (c) “periphrasis” to perform various grammatical tasks.<sup>14</sup>

Although they provide some insight into a historical dimension of Tamil, these four strata overlap one another greatly, giving way to various metrical patterns of word construction. Based on the structure of the language alone, it seemed impossible to find a unique place for a given poem on the historical scale. Therefore, all the 2,381 poems were telescoped for the purpose of this study as belonging to a single unit of time. I surveyed the poems numerous times in many different ways: in a random order within a given anthology and in ascending and descending orders.<sup>15</sup>

It became clear, as the survey proceeded from one poem to another, that the original significance of some linguistic forms had become obscure over time. Then I realized that the object of survey, namely classical Tamil poetry, reflects a language (classical Tamil) which originally developed over many centuries but I am viewing it now after two thousand years through my knowledge of another language (modern Tamil) that is a continuation but not an exact reproduction of its ancestor (classical Tamil).

---

illustrating stem mutation.

<sup>13</sup> This technique is referred to as “suffixation” in this study. See “Formation Mechanisms” for examples illustrating suffixation.

<sup>14</sup> (A) and (b) can be referred to as “extension” techniques. The term “extension” is adopted from Anttila (1972:148). “Periphrasis” is a technique by which two or more individually derived forms are used in certain combinations across word boundaries. See “Formation Mechanisms” for examples illustrating extension and periphrasis.

<sup>15</sup> If one or two linguistically significant forms were left out in the process, it must be attributed to human error.

The attempt to explain the characteristics of the object of survey in yet another language, English, which bears a patent genealogical and structural remoteness from the former, added another challenging parameter to the task. Consequently, there arose moments of frustration and the effort to discover the lost original significance of certain linguistic items developed into a competition between frustration, pride, and reality, in which reality won out in the end: as typical of any classical language, a few classical Tamil linguistic forms are and will remain obscure indefinitely.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, unparalleled triumphant joy emerged from deciphering what could be deciphered.

---

<sup>16</sup> As a result, a few items like an, icin, in, and (k)k were safely deposited in a vault of obscurities, but were given contextual labels for practical purposes. They are discussed also in "A Note on Miscellaneous Items."

## FORMATION MECHANISMS

**GENERAL:** The mechanism used to derive a given grammatical form is here called a “formation mechanism.” The grammatical concepts discussed in this study utilize one or more of the following five formation mechanisms: use of the bare stem, stem mutation, suffixation, extension, and periphrasis.<sup>1</sup> A good understanding of these mechanisms is most helpful for understanding the Tamil of this period. The mechanisms are explained in the following paragraphs with some examples. More examples are given in the rest of the volume in various sections.

---

<sup>1</sup> See “A Note on Stems” in “Morphophonemics.”

### The Mechanism of Using the Bare Stem

On many occasions the bare stem, which consists of a nominal or verbal root with or without a formative suffix, expresses a given grammatical concept. For example, one way to express an imperative notion is to use the bare stem:

uva iṇi vāli tōli (aka.65:7)  
 [uva 'to rejoice']  
 'Rejoice now, my friend.'

### The Mechanism of Stem Mutation

Certain grammatical forms are derived by "stem mutation."<sup>2</sup> For example, the oblique form of a human personal pronoun is obtained by shortening the long vowel in the stem: *tān* 'he' > *tan* 'his.'<sup>3</sup> Another type of stem mutation is certain consonantal changes in certain verbs in order to derive the causative/effective form: *tuyil* 'to sleep' > *tuyirru* 'to cause to sleep; make ... sleep.'

### The Mechanism of Suffixation

Nominal and verbal roots serve as bases for adding different types of affixes, and the affixes thus added are commonly known as "suffixes." Those suffixes here are simply referred to as "markers" because they mark grammatical concepts. Information about the various markers that are added to these stems in classical Tamil is provided in the following

---

<sup>2</sup> See "Methodology" for the source of the term. For a detailed discussion of stem mutation, see "Morphophonemics."

<sup>3</sup> "Human" personal pronouns are pronouns that refer to human beings. For more information, see "Person-Number-Gender" and "Pronouns."



few paragraphs with some crucial examples. More examples with translation are provided in various chapters in this study.

Markers that are added directly to a noun-like or **nominal stem** are:

(i) plural marker ± case marker/postposition

iyaṅkaḷ < iyam + kaḷ (malai:277)

aracarkaḷ < arac(u) + ar + kaḷ (kali.25:3)

makaḷirullum < makaḷ + ir + ullum (pati.31:27)

(ii) **an** or **in**<sup>4</sup> ± case marker ± particle

ataṅāl < atu + an + āl (mull:17)

kaṇṇiṅāl < kaṇ + iṅ + āl (kali.108:28)

paraṅkuṇṇiṅkum < paraṅkuṇṇu + iṅ + ku + um (pari.17:43)

(iii) case marker ± particle

avara < avar + a (puṛa.15:9)

vayiṅāṇē < vayiṅ + āṇ + ē (pati.36:1)

(iv) particle

cuṇṇamum < cuṇṇam + um (aka.17:6)

(v) PNG marker, occasionally preceded by **an**, **ā(t)**, **āl**, **i**, **iṅ**, and/or a glide (**ñ**, **n**, **y**, or **v**), to derive an adjectival/appellative noun

kāla < kāl + a (pari.20:9)

kālaṇa < kāl + an + a (kuru.7:1)

iṇṇātu < iṅ + ā(t) + tu (kuru.245:2)

iṇṇātana < iṅ + āt + an + a (kuru.309:7)

cākāṭṭālar < cākātu + āl + ar (pati.27:14)

iṇiya < iṅ + i + glide y + a (kali.53:12)

---

<sup>4</sup> The **an** and **iṅ** are considered as **cāriyai** “augment or inflectional increments” in the tradition. For more information, see “A Note on Miscellaneous Items.”

eruttiṇa < eruttu + iṇ + a (puṛa.387:7)  
 valaiṇār < valai + ñ + ar (peru.274)  
 viṇainar < viṇai + n + ar (pati.62:16)  
 maṭava < maṭa + glide v + a (kuṛu.66:1)

- (vi) **āy** to an adjectival noun or a verbal noun for deriving an adverbial form

iyalpiṛṛāy < iyalpiṛru + āy (pari.7:48)  
 iṛaiccīyāy < iṛaicci + glide y + āy (kali.8:9)

- (vii) **āṇ** or **iṇ** to a verbal noun ending with **al**, **āl**, **kal**, **tal**, or **mai** for deriving a causal form meaning 'since'

oḷukalāṇ < oḷukal + āṇ (kali.39:14)  
 uṇmaiṃyāṇ < uṇmai + glide y + āṇ (puṛa.182:9)  
 teṇṭataliṇ < teṇṭatal + iṇ (aka.1:10)

- (viii) **i** to an adjectival stem or **iṇ** to an adjectival noun for deriving an adverbial form

naṇi < naṇ + i (kuṛi.33)  
 nuṇṇitiṇ < nuṇṇitu + iṇ (neṭu.76)

- (ix) **il/iṇ(um)** to a nominative or oblique stem for deriving a comparative form

pitirvil < pitirvu + il (aka.1:18)  
 urumiṇ < urum + iṇ (puṛa.366:3)  
 kūṭiṇum < kūṭu + iṇ + um (kuṛu.374:7)  
 itaṇiṇ < itaṇ + iṇ (narr.322:2)

- (x) **um** to an adjectival noun for deriving an adverbial form

peritum < peritu + um (aka.59:2)

- (xi) **eṇ** to an imitative word; **eṇa** to an adjectival stem for deriving an imitative word functioning like an adverb

iḷumeṇ cummai < iḷum + eṇ cummai (poru.65)

melleṇa < mel + eṇa (aka.49:7)

- (xii) **ku** to an adjectival stem for deriving an adverbial form; to a nominative stem for deriving a comparative form

naṇku < nal + ku (matu.82)

vāliyōṛku < vāliyōṇ + ku (pari.2:21)

Markers that can be added directly to a **bare verb stem** are:

- (i) causative/transitive marker **tt**, **(p)pi**, or **vi**

naṭatta < naṭa + tt + a (pari.10:43)

pacappittōr < paca + ppi + tt + ōr (aiṅk.67:5)

koṭpittāṇ < koḷ + pi + tt + āṇ (kali.145:57)

arukuvittu < aruku + vi + tt + u (kali.142:2)

- (ii) PNG marker to derive a non-past personal verb or a negative personal verb

uḷeṇ < uḷ + eṇ (kuru.310:5)

ilaṇ < il + aṇ (aka.147:14)

māṭṭēṇ < māṭṭu + ēṇ (narr.342:3)

- (iii) PNG marker to derive a non-past participial noun or a negative participial noun

vallar < val + ar (pura.27:18)

cārāṇ < cār + āṇ (kali.38:19)

- (iv) negative **al** before the PNG marker to derive negative personal verbs and negative participial nouns; before the imperative/optative markers **ka** and **min** to derive negative imperatives

vēṇṭalam < vēṇṭu + al + am (pura.205:2)

poruntalar < poruntu + al + ar (aka.266:12)

vāraṅka < vār (\*var) + al + ka (aka.40:12)

koḷḷaṇmin < koḷ + al + min (pura.216:5)

- (v) **ā** to derive a negative adjectival participle or a negative adverbial participle; **ā** to precede the marker **mal** or **mai** for deriving negative adverbial participles or to precede the marker **mai** for deriving a negative verbal noun

<i>kalaṅkā</i> < <i>kalaṅku</i> + <i>ā</i>	( <i>puṛa</i> .230:4)
<i>aṛiyā</i> < <i>aṛi</i> + glide <i>y</i> + <i>ā</i>	( <i>narr</i> .275:4)
<i>toypatāmal</i> < <i>toypaṭu</i> + <i>ā</i> + <i>mal</i>	( <i>malai</i> :365)
<i>vaḷāmai</i> < <i>vaḷu</i> + <i>ā(a)</i> + <i>mai</i>	( <i>kali</i> .2:17)
<i>aṛiyāmai</i> < <i>aṛi</i> + glide <i>y</i> + <i>ā</i> + <i>mai</i>	( <i>pati</i> .15:14)

- (vi) **āt** before the addition of a participial noun marker, adjectival participle marker **a**, adverbial participle marker **u**, or negative imperative/optative markers **i**, **mē**, and **mō**. These are negative forms.

<i>uṇarātōr</i> < <i>uṇar</i> + <i>āt</i> + <i>ōr</i>	( <i>pati</i> .51:24)
<i>aṛiyāta</i> < <i>aṛi</i> + glide <i>y</i> + <i>āt</i> + <i>a</i>	( <i>kali</i> .30:7)
<i>āṇātu</i> < <i>āṇ</i> + <i>āt</i> + <i>u</i>	( <i>pati</i> .21:11)
<i>cūlātē</i> < <i>cūl</i> + <i>āt</i> + <i>u/ē</i>	( <i>kali</i> .6:8)
<i>varuntāti</i> < <i>varuntu</i> + <i>āt</i> + <i>i</i>	( <i>kali</i> .107:30)
<i>ceppātīmē</i> < <i>ceppu</i> + <i>āt</i> + <i>ī</i> + <i>mē</i>	( <i>aka</i> .52:15)
<i>aḷātīmō</i> < <i>aḷu</i> + <i>āt</i> + <i>ī</i> + <i>mō</i>	( <i>narr</i> .13:2)

- (vii) negative **il** before an imperative marker to derive a negative imperative

<i>kāṇiliyarō</i> < <i>kāṇ</i> + <i>il</i> + <i>iyarō</i>	( <i>pati</i> .44:8)
---	----------------------

- (viii) **ēl** before the imperative marker **ka** to derive a negative imperative

<i>cērērka</i> < <i>ceṛu</i> + <i>ēl</i> + <i>ka</i>	( <i>pari</i> .20:68)
--	-----------------------

- (ix) verbal noun marker

<i>keṭal</i> < <i>keṭu</i> + <i>al</i>	( <i>puṛa</i> .366:17)
<i>iṇmai</i> < <i>il</i> + <i>mai</i>	( <i>pati</i> .68:15)

- (x) past/completive or non-past/non-completive marker which may be followed by certain other markers

cīi < cī + i	(kali.101:8)
vēṭṭēm < vēḷ + tt + ēm	(aiṅk.6:6)
āṇṭu < āḷ + t + u	(pura.201:10)
pulittana < puli + tt + aṇ + a	(aka.394:1)
porutu < poru + t + u	(kuri:135)
karintu < kari + nt + u	(aka.169:1)
pukaṇṇu < pukal + t + u	(tiru:67)
irakkum < ira + kk + um	(pura.180:11)
kāṇkam < kāṇ + k + am	(narr.81:9)
eṇṇar < eṇi + ṇ + ar	(aka.71:12)
pulatti < pula + tt + i	(aka.39:25)
eṇṇutir < eṇṇu + t + ir	(aka.5:16)
piṇaḷna < piṇaḷ + n + a	(pati.13:1)
uraippal < urai + pp + al	(aka.28:2)
kāṇpal < kāṇ + p + al	(pati.77:12)
eṇmaṇār < eṇ + m + aṇ + ār	(kali.119:16)
vāḷval < vāḷ + v + al	(pura.245:7)

- (xi) **um** or **ūu** to derive a non-past adjectival participle; **ūu** for deriving an infinitive

īyum < ī + glide y + um	(pura.22:33)
etirkoḷḷūu < etirkoḷ + ūu	(kali.146:38)
kāṇūu < kāṇ + ūu	(kuri:230)

- (xii) infinitive marker

cuṇṇa < cuṇṇu + a	(malai:46)
maṇaiyā < maṇai + glide y + ā	(malai:210)
pēṇiyar < pēṇ + iyar	(pati.21:5)
kāṇūu < kāṇ + ūu	(kuri:230)
taṇimār < taṇi + mār	(malai:303)

- (xiii) **iṇ** for deriving a conditional  
 tuñciṇ < tuñcu + iṇ (aka.122:5)
- (xiv) **āṇum** (\*āyiṇum) to derive a concessive of fact (“although”);  
**iṇum** to derive a concessive of fact or a concessive of supposition  
 (“even if”)  
 eṇṇāṇum < eṇ + āṇum (kali.140:13)  
 collṇum < col + iṇum (kuru.306:2)  
 peyariṇum < peyar + iṇum (pura.3:14)
- (xv) imperative/optative marker, positive or negative  
 ciṛakka < ciṛa + kka (matu:194)  
 uṇmiṇ < uṇ + miṇ (pati.18:1)  
 peyaral < peyar + al (pura.3:14)

Markers which can be added directly to the **past stem** of a verb are:

- (i) PNG marker which may be preceded by **aṇ**, **iciṇ**, or **iṇ** for deriving a past personal verb  
 ceyta < ceyt + a (aink.143:3)  
 kaṭintaṇam < kaṭint + aṇ + am (aka.5:26)  
 ceṇṇiciṇōṇ < ceṇṇ + iciṇ + ōṇ (narr.300:6)  
 curukkiṇem < curukki + iṇ + em (pura.206:10)
- (ii) PNG marker which may be preceded by **aṇ**, **iciṇ**, or **iṇ** for deriving a past participial noun  
 nalkūrtār < nalkūrnt + āṛ (kali.50:14)  
 māṇṭaṇa < māṇṭ + aṇ + a (pati.19:27)  
 paṭaittiṇōṛ < paṭaitt + iciṇ + ōṛ (pura.18:23)  
 vēṇṭiṇar < vēṇṭi + iṇ + ar (peru.444)
- (iii) negative **il** before the addition of a PNG marker for deriving a negative personal verb or negative participial noun

melintilaḷ < melint + il + aḷ (kuru.182:7)  
 āyvantilār < āyvant + il + ār (pari.9:25)

(iv) verbal noun marker

nekiḷntatai < nekiḷnt + atai (kali.132:15)

(v) past/completive adjectival participle marker **a** which is occasionally preceded by **iṇ**

tokutta < tokutt + a (kuru.372:2)  
 tuvariṇa < tuvari + iṇ + a (aka.243:1)

(vi) adverbial participle marker **i** or **u**

vīci < vīcu/vīci + i (matu.752)  
 toḷutu < toḷut + u (poru.150)

(vii) **āl** which may be preceded by **iṇ** to derive a conditional; and **ēl** for deriving a conditional

kaṇṭāl < kaṇṭ + āl (pura.390:25)  
 āṇāl < \*āyiṇ + āl (kali.108:9)  
 uṇṭēl < uṇṭ + ēl (kali.38:13)

(viii) the comparative **anna** or **enna** ‘like’, the quotative **eṇa** ‘thus, that, so that’, some nouns, the particle **āṇku** ‘thus, in that manner’, and the postposition **uḷi** ‘when, at the time’

eḷutiyanna < eḷuti + glide y + anna (aka.297:13)  
 vaṭittanna < vaṭitt + anna (aka.172:6)  
 kāṇṇanna < kāṇṇ + anna (malai.498)  
 māyttēṇa < māytt + eṇa (aka.297:6)  
 eṭuttēru < eṭutt + ēru (pati.41:23)  
 niṇṇāṇku < niṇṇ + āṇku (pura.35:18)  
 ceṇṇuḷi < ceṇṇ + uḷi (aka.48:6)

(ix) **um** to provide the sense ‘although’

kaṇṭum < kaṇṭ + um (pura.173:9)

$\text{aṇṛiyum} < \text{aṇṛi} + \text{glide } y + \text{um}$  (*malai:134*)

Markers which are added directly to the **non-past stem** of a verb are:

- (i) PNG marker, which may be preceded by **aṇ**, for deriving a non-past personal verb

$\text{uḷa} < \text{uḷ} + \text{a}$  (*kali.117:8*)

$\text{civakkum} < \text{civakk} + \text{um}$  (*kuṛu.354:1*)

$\text{uraippal} < \text{uraipp} + \text{al}$  (*aka.28:2*)

$\text{takaippaṇa} < \text{takaipp} + \text{aṇ} + \text{a}$  (*kali.3:17*)

$\text{kāṇpar} < \text{kāṇp} + \text{ar}$  (*kali.110:22*)

$\text{eṇmaṇār} < \text{eṇm} + \text{aṇ} + \text{ār}$  (*kali.119:16*)

- (ii) PNG marker which may be preceded by **āl** or **aṇ** for deriving a non-past participial noun

$\text{pīraḷna} < \text{pīraḷn} + \text{a}$  (*pati.13:1*)

$\text{aṛiyāḷar} < \text{aṛi} + \text{glide } y + \text{āl} + \text{ar}$  (*pura.393:4*)

$\text{koḷvaṇa} < \text{koḷv} + \text{aṇ} + \text{a}$  (*kali.82:19*)

- (iii) negative **al** to a non-past stem ending with **(k)k** and following it with a PNG marker or an imperative/optative marker; **al** to a non-past stem ending with **(k)k** and following it with **āt** and a PNG marker or adjectival participle marker

$\text{tīrkkalār} < \text{tīrkk} + \text{al} + \text{ār}$  (*kali.140:17*)

$\text{tarukallāy} < \text{taruk} + \text{al} + \text{āy}$  (*kali.148:17*)

$\text{aṛikallāy} < \text{aṛik} + \text{al} + \text{āy}$  (*kali.95:26*)

$\text{toḷukallīr} < \text{toḷuk} + \text{al} + \text{īr}$  (*pari.15:34*)

$\text{uraikkallātavar} < \text{uraikk} + \text{al} + \text{āt} + \text{avar}$  (*kali.61:14*)

$\text{kaḷikallāta} < \text{kaḷik} + \text{al} + \text{āt} + \text{a}$  (*kali.20:21*)

- (iv) verbal noun marker

$\text{kīlippatu} < \text{kīlipp} + \text{atu}$  (*aka.72:1*)



- (v) non-past adjectival participle marker **a** to a periphrastic non-past stem; non-past adjectival participle marker **um** to a non-past stem ending with **(k)k** or **pp**

cērkiṇṇa < cērkiṇ + a (pari.22:35)  
 karikkum < karikk + um (kuru.363:2)  
 eṭuppum < eṭupp + um (kuru.398:5)

- (vi) **a**, **āṇ**, or **u** to a non-past stem that ends with **(k)k**, **t**, **(p)p**, or **v** for deriving an infinitive

maṛakka < maṛakk + a (aiṅk.470:5)  
 pukuta < pukut + a (pari.22:11)  
 maṛappa < maṛapp + a (pura.68:19)  
 kāṇpāṇ < kāṇp + āṇ (kali.97:7)  
 kuḷaivāṇ < kuḷaiv + āṇ (narr.229:9)  
 niṇaipu < niṇaip + u (narr.208:4)

- (vii) **il/iṇ** to a non-past stem ending with **(k)k** or **(p)p** for deriving a conditional

kaḷikkil < kaḷikk + il (aiṅk.415:3)  
 kēṭkiṇ < kēṭk + iṇ (aiṅk.81:5)  
 kēṭpiṇ < kēṭp + iṇ (aka.98:28)

- (viii) the comparative **anna** ‘like’, some nouns, and the postpositions **aḷavai** ‘measure, limit’ and **uḷi** ‘when, at the time’ to a non-past stem ending with **(p)p** or **v**

kāṇpaṇṇa < kāṇp + aṇṇa (pura.211:3)  
 peyviṭam < peyv + iṭam (pura.173:5)  
 muyalvaḷavai < muyalv + aḷavai (aka.189:10)  
 kēṭpuḷi < kēṭp + uḷi (kali.146:30)

- (ix) **iṇum** to a non-past stem ending with **(k)k** or **(p)p** to provide the senses ‘even if’ and ‘although’

ākīnum < āk + īnum

(*pura.216:3*)

alippinūm < alipp + īnum

(*narr.35:9*)

(In fact, the past/completive stem and the non-past/non-completive stem can be taken as the basic derived forms of the classical Tamil verb; other verb forms and certain types of nouns can be further derived from these stems.)

### The Mechanism of Extension

The extended use of a suffix or a derived form to denote more than one grammatical concept is the mechanism of “extension.”<sup>5</sup> An example is: **tirattal** (*pura.44:11, 12*). As an affirmative imperative/optative, this form (< **tira** ‘to open’ + **ttal** suffix) means ‘Open!’, whereas as an affirmative verbal noun it refers to “opening” as an action/process. Here, the form **tirattal** has an extended usage.

### The Mechanism of Periphrasis

In some cases, the grammatical concept spreads across words. For example, one way to express the concept of an affirmative imperative/optative is to use a verbal noun that ends with **al** or **(t)tal** followed by **vēṇṭum** ‘is necessary’: e.g., āṅku p **peyartal vēṇṭum** ‘(You) must go there’ (*aka.10:8*). Here, the combination of **peyartal** ‘moving’ (< **peyar** ‘to move’ + **tal**) and **vēṇṭum** ‘is necessary’ provides the imperative/optative sense ‘must move.’

---

<sup>5</sup> See “Methodology” for the source of the term.

## PHONOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

**GENERAL:** Classical Tamil reflects a phonological system that contains significant contrasts absent in many non-Indic languages. Most striking among these are the contrast between long and short vowels and the contrast between retroflex consonants and non-retroflex consonants. Another important feature that distinguishes classical Tamil from many other languages is that it does not contain aspirated sounds. The existence of an alveolar stop (ஐ) sets classical Tamil apart even from modern Tamil, in which the old alveolar stop has become an alveolar trill.

### Tamil Letters (eḷuttu)

The term **eḷuttu** “letters” is the generic term that refers to Tamil speech sounds. In the tradition, the **eḷuttu** are categorized basically as

---

<sup>1</sup> The statements in this chapter are based on a survey of classical Tamil poetry as well as the *Tolkāppiyam* and its commentaries. For a succinct description of the *Tolkāppiyam*, see Ramanujan (1985:302). See Zvelebil (1973:131-154) for detailed information on it.

**iyarkai eḷuttu** “natural/spontaneous letters” and **cārpū eḷuttu** “dependent letters.”<sup>2</sup> The natural letters (**iyarkai eḷuttu**) are of two types: vowels (**uyir eḷuttu**) and consonants (**mey eḷuttu**). The dependent letters (**cārpū eḷuttu**) are extra-short **i**, extra-short **u**, and the **āyṭam** which is represented in this study as **ḥ**.

Two more terms, **uyirmey** and **orru**, referring to these letters are used in the tradition: **uyirmey**, which can be understood as a “vowelled consonant,” is a conglomerate of a vowel (**uyir**) and a consonant (**mey**): e.g., **ka** which is the conglomerate of the consonant **k** and the vowel **a** (க < க + அ). **orru** is a “vowelless consonant,” a consonant that is not combined with a vowel: e.g., **k** which is just the consonant **k** (க்).

### The Term **eḷuttu** and Syllable

A **uyir eḷuttu** (vowel) or a **uyirmey eḷuttu** (vowelled consonant) optionally followed by one or two **orru** (vowelless consonant) is the equivalent of what is normally understood as a syllable, here marked in bold type: e.g., **அ** (**a**), **ஆர்** (**ār** ‘to be full’), **ஆர்த்து** (**ārttu** ‘having filled’), **க** (**ka**), **கல்** (**kal** ‘stone’), **போனம்** (**pōnm** ‘it seems like’), **மலை** (**malai** ‘mountain’).

### Natural Letters (**iyarkai eḷuttu**)

These are actually better understood as “primary letters” (**mutal eḷuttu**). Vowels and consonants comprise this group. In the tradition, length/duration is the basis for categorizing the vowels while the manner of articulation is the basis for categorizing the consonants. Duration is discussed below. The twelve vowels (**a**, **ā**, **i**, **ī**, **u**, **ū**, **e**, **ē**, **ai**, **o**, **ō**, and **au**)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, Nacṇārkkiniyam, Rule 7.

are divided into short vowels (**kurṛeḷuttu** or **kuṛil**: **a**, **i**, **u**, **e**, and **o**), long vowels (**neṭṭeḷuttu** or **neṭil**: **ā**, **ī**, **ū**, **ē**, **ai**, **ō**, and **au**), and elongated vowels (**uyir aḷapeṭai**: **āa**, **īi**, **ūu**, **ēe**, **aii**, **ōo**, and **auu**).<sup>3</sup> The eighteen consonants (**k**, **ṇ**, **c**, **ñ**, **ṭ**, **ṇ**, **t**, **n**, **p**, **m**, **y**, **r**, **l**, **v**, **ḷ**, **ḷ**, **ṛ**, and **ṇ**) are divided into “hard class” (**val inam**: **k**, **c**, **ṭ**, **t**, **p**, and **ṛ**), “soft class” (**mel inam**: **ṇ**, **ñ**, **ṇ**, **n**, **m**, and **ṇ**), and “middle class” (**iṭai inam**: **y**, **r**, **l**, **v**, **ḷ**, and **ḷ**).<sup>4</sup> Certain consonants are elongated in some contexts and called “elongated consonants” (**orru aḷapeṭai**: **ṇṇ**, **ññ**, **ṇṇ**, **nn**, **mm**, **yy**, **ll**, **vv**, **ḷḷ**, **nn**, and **ḷḷ**).

### Vowels (uyir ‘life-breath’)

Each long vowel is associated with a short vowel. The long vowel **ā** has **a** as its shorter counterpart, similarly **ī** has **i**, **ū** has **u**, **ē** has **e**, **ai** has **i**, **ō** has **o**, and **au** has **u**. In orthography, each of these short and long vowels is represented by a distinct letter. These vowels along with their equivalents in modern Tamil script are as follows<sup>5</sup>:

<sup>3</sup> Some might hold that old Tamil contains five short vowels (**a**, **i**, **u**, **e**, and **o**), five long vowels (**ā**, **ī**, **ū**, **ē**, and **ō**), and two diphthongs (**ai** and **au**).

The Tolkāppiyam groups **ai** and **au** with long vowels and equates the combination of **a** and **i** to **ai**, the combination of **a** and **u** to **au**. See Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, ḷampūraṇam, Rules 4, 54, and 55.

See Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, ḷampūraṇam:6. Also see “Juxtaposed Vowels” later in this chapter and “Lengthening of Sounds (aḷapeṭai) and Vowel Clusters” in this study.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, ḷampūraṇam, Rules 35 and 37.

<sup>5</sup> Modern Tamil script is used here for two reasons. The poems surveyed for this study are available in modern Tamil script, and the readers of this volume are more likely to be familiar with modern Tamil script than with archaic scripts. For a discussion of old Tamil script, see Zvelebil (1975:17-18).

		Front	Central	Back
High	short	i இ		u உ
	long	ī ி		ū னு
	short	e எ		o ஒ
Mid	long	ē ஏ		ō ஔ
	short		a அ	
	long		ā ஆ	

Other vowels: ai ஐ and au ஔ.

Consonants (mey ‘body’)

In orthography, each of the eighteen consonants is represented by a distinct letter. These consonants along with their equivalents in modern Tamil script are as follows:

	Stops (“hard class”)	Nasals (“soft class”)	Liquids, Semi-Vowels (“middle class”)
Velar	k க	ṅ ங	ḡ ஃ
Palatal	c ச	ñ ஞ	y ய
Retroflex	ṭ ட	ṇ ண	
Alveolar	r ர	n ன	r ṛ, l ழ <sup>6</sup>
Dental	t த	n ந	l ṛ, l ṅ <sup>6</sup>
Bi-labial	p ப	m ம	
Labio-dental			v வ

<sup>6</sup> Here l ṛ and l ṅ are classified as “dentals” on the basis of the articulatory effort (“muyarci”) involved in producing them as described in Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, ḷampūraṇam, Rule 96.

### The āytam (ḥ)

The **āytam**, literally meaning ‘instrument/weapon’, is the name of a Tamil speech sound represented in modern Tamil script as ஃ. In poetry, it is treated like a vowelless consonant. As mentioned earlier, it is represented as ḥ in this study. In modern Tamil, the pronunciation of this letter is similar to the sound **h** in English, for example, in a word like “hen.” From the modern pronunciation of the **āytam** one can describe it as a “voiceless velar fricative.”

The **āytam** occurs in two contexts. One is in the middle of a word where it is preceded by a short vowel and followed by a consonant from the hard class (e.g., **eḥku** ‘spear, wrought iron’). The other context for the **āytam** is morphophonemic. When a monosyllabic word containing a short vowel and ending with **l** or **ḷ** is followed by a word beginning with the dental consonant **t**, the **l** and **ḷ** change to the **āytam** while the dental **t** following the **l** changes to **r** and the **t** following the **ḷ** changes to **ṭ** (e.g., **pal** ‘many’ + **tuḷi** ‘drops’ > **paḥṛuḷi** ‘many drops’; **kaḷ** ‘toddy’ + **tu PNG** > **kaḥṭu**).

The **āytam** occurs infrequently in old Tamil and its occurrence is rarer in modern Tamil.<sup>7</sup> **aḥku** ‘to shrink’, **aḥtu** ‘that one’, **Aḥtai** (a person’s name), **iḥtu** ‘this one’, **eḥkam** ‘spear’, **eḥku** ‘spear’, **kaḥṭu** ‘(sediment of) toddy’, **paḥṛi** ‘boar’, **Paḥṛuḷi** (name of a river), and **veḥku** ‘to desire’ are a few words which contain the **āytam** in old Tamil.

### Dependent letters (cārpu eḷuttu)

A certain variety of two vowels and one consonant are perceived as dependent letters: extra-short **i**, extra-short **u**, and **āytam** (**ḥ**). They are

---

<sup>7</sup> Extensive modern literature on the **āytam** is available. For further information, see Balasubramanian (1976:561-582).

known as “dependent letters” (**cāṛpu eḷuttu**) in the tradition because of several reasons. They are variants or derivatives of some other letters (**eḷuttu**) or are often elided. In the case of the **āytam**, there is one more reason — unlike other vowelless consonants, it never allows a vowel to be joined to it.

The extra-short **u** (**kuṛṛiyal ukaram**) is a variant of the regular short **u**. It occurs at the end of a word preceded by a hard consonant (**k**, **c**, **ṭ**, **t**, **p**, or **r**) which in turn is preceded by a long vowel or yet another consonant (e.g., **kācu** ‘coin’; **kāṭṭu** ‘to show’; **teḷku**, name of an insect). It is not a stable letter. It is deleted when followed by an item beginning with a vowel. If this short **u** is preceded by a soft consonant (**ñ**, **ṇ**, **n**, **m**, or **ṇ**) or a middle consonant (**y**, **r**, **l**, **v**, **ḷ**, or **ḷ**), then it is no longer referred to as **kuṛṛiyal ukaram**, but receives the name **muṛṛiyal ukaram**. The **muṛṛiyal ukaram** is not really different from the regular short **u** and is also not considered as a dependent letter. Except on one occasion, that is in the initial syllable of the word **nuntai** ‘your father’, the **muṛṛiyal ukaram** always occurs at the end of a word.

The extra-short **i** (**kuṛṛiyal ikaram**) is a derivative of the extra-short **u** and therefore a dependent letter. It is always followed by **y** and is a morphophonemic product; that is to say that it occurs as a result of combining two items. When an extra-short **u** (**kuṛṛiyal ukaram**) is followed by a word beginning with **y**, it changes to **i** which happens to be shorter than the regular short vowel **i** and therefore is called the extra-short **i** (**kuṛṛiyal ikaram**: **nāku** ‘young cow’ + **yātu** ‘which one?’ > **nākiyātu**). There is one more context where the extra-short **i** is supposed to occur — when the imperative suffix **miyā** is added to a stem ending with **l** or **ḷ**, the



short **i** in **miyā** is shortened further and called the extra-short **i** (cel ‘to go’ + **miyā** > **ceṇmiyā** ‘Go!’; **kēḷ** ‘to hear, listen’ + **miyā** > **kēṇmiyā** ‘Listen!’).<sup>8</sup> Note that this suffix **miyā** is not attested in classical Tamil poetry.

**Other Letters Which are Shortened:** Besides the short **i** and short **u**, there are certain other letters which are shortened in certain contexts. Note that these particular letters are not called “dependent letters.” Apparently, the vowels **ai** and **au**, which are normally long, are shortened in two contexts: (a) when not used in isolation for citation purposes; (b) when not elongated (so as to result in **aii** and **auu**). This process of shortening is known as **kuṟukkam** ‘shortening’ and the shortened vowels are referred to by the terms **aikāra-k-kuṟukkam** and **aukāra-k-kuṟukkam** respectively. Another letter which is shortened in certain contexts is the consonant **m** and the process is known as the **makara-k-kuṟukkam** ‘shortening of **m**.’ The consonant **m** is shortened in two contexts: (a) when preceded by **ṇ** or **ṇ** within a word; (b) when occurring at the end of a word and is followed by the consonant **v** which begins the next word.<sup>9</sup>

### Lengths of Letters (**māttirai**)

The term **māttirai** refers to the duration/length of the **eḷuttu** discussed above. In the tradition, vowels and consonants are considered to have intrinsic length. One unit measure of length (**māttirai**) is equal to a snap of the fingers or a wink of the eyes.<sup>10</sup> Consonants measure one-half unit in length, while short and long vowels measure one and two units respectively.<sup>11</sup> Elongated vowels (**uyir aḷapeṭai**: **āa**, **īi**, **ūu**, **ēe**, **aii**, **ōo**, and **auu**) have three unit measures of length. When a consonant is elongated

<sup>8</sup> Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, Iḷampūraṇam, Rule 34.

<sup>9</sup> See Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, Iḷampūraṇam, Rules 11 and 13, for details and examples.

(**orru alapeṭai**: **ṇṇ**, **ṇṇ** etc.), it is considered as having one unit measure of length.<sup>12</sup> Each one of the dependent letters (extra-short **i**, extra-short **u**, and **āytam**) has one half unit measure of length.

The shortened **ai** and **au** have one unit measure of length each. The shortened **m** has one quarter of a unit measure of length.

### Alphabetical Ordering of Vowels and Consonants

The alphabetical ordering of old Tamil vowels and consonants is not easy to reconstruct. Two systems can be discerned.

1. The following order is based on the introductory rules in the *Tolkāppiyam*<sup>13</sup>:

a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, e, ē, ai, o, ō, au, k, ṇ, c, ṇ, t, n, p, m, y, r, l, v, ḷ, ḷ, ṛ, ṛ, and ḥ.

அ, ஆ, இ, ஈ, உ, ஊ, எ, ஏ, ஐ, ஒ, ஓ, ஒள, க்,ங், ச், ஞ், ட், ண், த், ந், ப், ம், ய், ர், ல், வ், ழ், ள், ற், ன், ஃ.

<sup>10</sup> *Tolkāppiyam*, *eḷuttatikāram*, *ḷampūraṇam*, Rule 7.

<sup>11</sup> *Tolkāppiyam*, *eḷuttatikāram*, *ḷampūraṇam*, Rules 3 and 4.

<sup>12</sup> See “Lengthening of Vowels (*alapeṭai*) and Vowel Clusters” for more on elongation of vowels and consonants.

<sup>13</sup> The convention followed in modern Tamil is almost the same. The *Tolkāppiyam* does not provide an alphabetical ordering of Tamil vowels and consonants. One can infer from a few rules in it that:

(a) the vowel **a** அ begins the alphabet series and the consonant **ṇ** ண completes it;

(b) **au** is the last in the series of the vowels and **ṇ** is the last in the series of the consonants. The alphabetical order of the **āytam** (ஃ) is not clear. I have placed it at the end because *Tolkāppiyam* introduces it as a “dependent letter.” In modern Tamil, the **āytam** is placed at the end of the vowels.

See *Tolkāppiyam*, *eḷuttatikāram*, *ḷampūraṇam*, Rules 1, 2, 8, and 9.

2. The following order is based on the order in which the Tolkāppiyam discusses their manner of articulation:<sup>14</sup>

a, ā, i, ī, e, ē, ai, u, ū, o, ō, au, k, ṇ, c, ṇ, t, n, r, ṇ, r, l, l, p, m, v, y, and ḥ.

அ, ஆ, இ, ஈ, எ, ஏ, ஐ, உ, ஊ, ஒ, ஓ, ஒள, க்,ங், ச், ஞ், ட், ண், த், ந், ற், ன், ற், ழ், ல், ள், ப், ம், வ், ய், ஃ

### Distribution of Vowels and Consonants

**Distribution of vowels:** In classical Tamil poetry, any of the twelve vowels occurs in word-initial position. In word-medial position, vowels are joined to the consonants preceding them orthographically. Technically, any vowel can occur in word-final position.<sup>15</sup> However, the short vowels *e* and *o* have a restricted occurrence in the sense that they are in word-final position in only a few roots (e.g., *ce* ‘red’, *no* ‘to suffer’) and are theoretically allowed in word-final position if they follow their respective longer counterparts, the long *ē* and the long *ō*. And they do occur in classical Tamil poetry when *ē* and *ō* are elongated: *ēe y ōo eṇa viḷi ēṇpikka* ‘as she called out *ēe* and *ōo*’ (*pari.19:61*).

**Juxtaposed vowels:** Juxtaposed vowels (vowels that occur in adjacent positions either within a word or across words) are found in classical Tamil. Sometimes, a long vowel is elongated beyond its intrinsic length for metrical purposes. The elongation is indicated orthographically by adding the long vowel’s shorter counterpart once or twice after the long vowel. No glide is inserted between the juxtaposed vowels formed in this manner. This process is prosodic and known as *aḷapeṭai* (“elongation”).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See Tolkāppiyam, *eḷuttatikāram*, *ḷampūraṇam*, Rules 85-91, 93-99, and 101.

<sup>15</sup> See Tolkāppiyam, *eḷuttatikāram*, *ḷampūraṇam*, Rules 69 and 70.

<sup>16</sup> See “Theory of Classical Tamil Poetry” and “Lengthening of Sounds (*aḷapeṭai*) and

Juxtaposed vowels occur sometimes during a morphological process also. That is, a vowel cluster emerges between a stem and the item following it in certain situations. No glide is inserted between the juxtaposed vowels formed in this manner. Although this is not always a true *aḷapeṭai* process (elongation), the vowel cluster resulting from this process resembles an elongated vowel orthographically.<sup>17</sup>

Distribution of consonants: The consonants *k, c, ñ, t, n, p, m, y*, and *v* occur in word-initial position and are joined to the vowels following them orthographically.<sup>18</sup> In word-medial position also, consonants are joined to the vowels following them. The only consonant which does not occur between two vowels is *ṇ*. The consonants which occur in word-final position are *ṇ, m, y, r, l, ḷ, ḷ*, and *ṇ*.<sup>19</sup>

Vowel Clusters” for details and examples.

<sup>17</sup> For more information, see “Lengthening of Sounds (*aḷapeṭai*) and Vowel Clusters.”

<sup>18</sup>	<i>kaṇ</i>	கண் ‘eye’	( <i>kuru.5:5</i> )
	<i>cilai</i>	சிலை ‘bow’	( <i>malai.406</i> )
	<i>ñāṇrai</i>	ஞானரை ‘at the time of’	( <i>naṇṇ.287:7</i> )
	<i>tūvi</i>	துவி ‘feather/down’	( <i>neṭu.132</i> )
	<i>mī</i>	மீல் ‘blue’	( <i>naṇṇ.382:2</i> )
	<i>pēṇa</i>	பேண் ‘to cherish’	( <i>pari.8:126</i> )
	<i>muḷavu</i>	முழவு ‘drum’	( <i>aka.172:11</i> )
	<i>yāṭu</i>	யாடு ‘goat’	( <i>pati.78:13</i> )
	<i>viḷai</i>	விளை ‘to grow/mature’	( <i>pati.60:6</i> )
<sup>19</sup>	<i>pūṇ</i>	பூண் ‘to wear’	( <i>puṇa.166:12</i> )
	<i>maram</i>	மரம் ‘tree’	( <i>puṇa.349:6</i> )
	<i>toy</i>	தொய் ‘to sag’	( <i>malai.365</i> )
	<i>cuvar</i>	சுவர் ‘wall’	( <i>puṇa.211:19</i> )
	<i>tol</i>	தொல் ‘old/ancient’	( <i>puṇa.211:19</i> )
	<i>yāl</i>	யாழ் ‘harp’	( <i>puṇa.242:2</i> )
	<i>uḷ</i>	உள் ‘inside; heart’	( <i>aka.32:11</i> )
	<i>mūṇ</i>	மீன் ‘fish’	( <i>aka.106:2</i> )

**Consonant clusters:** Consonant clusters do not occur in word-initial position. Consonant clusters, usually composed of two consonants, occur in word-medial or word-final positions. However, there are some restrictions to this kind of clustering. For example, **k** and **ñ** cannot occur together, whereas **k** can follow its homorganic nasal **ñ** or itself: **ñk**; or **kk**.<sup>20</sup> There are even instances where three consonants occur as a cluster in word-medial position. The first consonant in a cluster of three consonants is **y**, **r**, or **l** among which, **r** and **l** do not follow a short vowel.<sup>21</sup>

#### Letters (**eḷuttu**) as Parts of Prosodic Units

In the tradition, the various letters discussed above are considered to be limbs (**uṟuppu**) of prosodic units. That is, certain prosodic units are defined in terms of these **eḷuttu**. Thus, short vowels and long vowels are supposed to be the limbs of the basic prosodic unit called **acai** as well as of alliteration (**toṭai** 'stringing') and rhythmic effect (**vaṇṇam** 'color, beauty'). The extra-short **u** (**kuṟṟiyal ukaram**) is a limb of an **acai**. Elongated vowels (**uyir aḷapeṭai**) and elongated consonants (**orru aḷapeṭai**) are limbs of alliteration (**toṭai**) and rhythmic effect (**vaṇṇam**). Vowelled consonants (**uyir mey**), the three classes of consonants (hard, soft, and middle classes), shortened **ai** (**aikāra-k-kuṟukkam**), and shortened **au**

---

Words ending with **ñ** and **v** are reconstructed from related forms:

<b>*uṟiñ</b>	உரிஞ் 'to rub' < <b>uṟiñiya</b>	( <i>aka.121:8</i> )
<b>*tev</b>	தெவ் 'to snatch/grab' < <b>tevi</b>	( <i>pari.11:69</i> )

<sup>20</sup> For more, see *Tolkāppiyam*, *eḷuttatikāram*, *Ḵampūraṇam*, Rules 22-30.

<sup>21</sup> <b>ytt</b> யத்த	<b>uyttu</b> உயத்து advp of <b>uy</b> 'to guide'	( <i>narr.101:4</i> )
<b>rkk</b> ரக்க	<b>īrkku</b> ஈர்க்கு 'straw'	( <i>poru:36</i> )
<b>lpp</b> ல்ப்ப	<b>ūlppa</b> உல்ப்பு infinitive of <b>ūl</b> 'to ripen'	( <i>aka.273:17</i> )

(**aukāra-k-kurukkam**) are limbs of alliteration (**toṭai**). The vowelless consonant (**orru**) is a limb of an elongated consonant (**orru alapeṭai**), whereas the **āytam** (**ḥ**) is a limb of **vaṇṇam**.<sup>22</sup>

Preoccupation with these letters must not come into play when defining other prosodic units, because the prosodic units they form at a lower level would in turn form prosodic units of a larger level. For example, a letter (**eḷuttu**) is a limb of an **acai** which in turn is a limb of a metrical foot (**cīr**) which in turn is a limb of a line in poetry (**aṭi**). Therefore, it would be irrelevant to talk from the point of view of an **eḷuttu** when considering the overall meter (**pā**) of a poem. One would then talk from the point of view of **cīr**, of which **eḷuttu** is, of course, a limb.

---

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Nacciṇārkkīṇiyam, ceyyūḷiyal, Rule 2, page 7.

## MORPHOPHONEMICS

(Joining Words and Affixes)

**GENERAL:** To understand word formation in classical Tamil poetry one has to understand how stems and affixes are joined to other stems and affixes. When a stem or affix is joined to another stem or affix to form a new word, certain kinds of changes occur in their shapes; this process of change is known as “morphophonemics” or “conjoining.” Even when there is no change, the “conjoining” is considered as a morphophonemic process.<sup>1</sup> More specifically, as when items A and B are joined, changes occur in some part of A and/or the first part of B. The following kinds of changes are possible and occur in classical Tamil: (a) one sound becoming another; (b) insertion of an affix between A and B; and (c) deletion of one or more sounds between adjacent sounds when A and B come together.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Some might be used to the term “sandhi” instead of “morphophonemics.” The Tolkāppiyam uses the term **puṇar nilai** ‘the state of uniting/joining’ (Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, Iḷampūraṇam, Rule 111).

<sup>2</sup> The Tolkāppiyam refers to these three kinds of changes as **mey piṛitu ātal** “one shape/form becomes another,” **mikutaḷ** “increase/addition,” and **kunral** “deletion” respec-

In the following pages the various morphophonemic changes observed in classical Tamil are discussed under two major headings: Stem Mutation and Changes Across Stems and Affixes. The present volume is oriented toward describing the words and phrases attested in classical Tamil rather than discussing the historical development of grammatical theories. Therefore, the morphophonemic changes below are discussed primarily from the point of view of the shapes of stems rather than from the point of view of the kinds of changes. First, a general note on stems is provided.

### A Note on Stems

Noun stems, adjectival stems, and verb stems are the three types of stems that can be identified on a semantic basis in classical Tamil.<sup>3</sup> The singular noun stem, which signifies a singular item, serves as the base for generating plural nouns and adjectival nouns, the adjectival stem for adjectival nouns, and the verb stem for verbal nouns, participial nouns,

---

tively (Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, ḷampūraṇam, Rule 110).

<sup>3</sup> This study does not make a formal distinction between “roots” and “stems,” mainly for the reason that the theoretical distinction between “roots” and “stems” is not part of this study. Here, both have been referred to by the term “stem” because once the roots begin to participate in the process of word formation for further use, they qualify to be called “stems.” For a detailed analysis of Tamil roots and formative suffixes in this period, see Andronov (1969:128-129) and Zvelebil et al. (1967:12-14, 16-20).

Traditional grammarians do not discuss “roots,” but classify Tamil words into two basic types, **peyar** “nouns” and **vinai** “verbs,” and consider two other types, **iṭai** “medial particles” which are basically items like affixes, and **uri** which are certain words which seem to assume special nuances when used in poetry. The **peyar** and **vinai** can function independently while **iṭai** and **uri** are supposed to be dependent upon the former two (Tolkāppiyam, collatikāram, Cēṇāvaraiyam, Rules 158 and 159). Actually, some of the words which have been identified as **iṭai** and **uri** by traditional grammarians could as well be construed as verbs and adjectives.



and various verb forms. Adjectival stems can be treated as noun-like stems, and a basic opposition can then be made between “nominal” and “verbal” stems. This basic opposition is followed in this study. Tamil adjectives do not enter into conjugation like the verbs, hence their grouping with the noun stems.<sup>4</sup>

These stems can be classified into three types according to their basic shapes: the bare stem, the mutated stem, and the derived stem. The bare stem is nothing but a “root” which is occasionally followed by a formative suffix. Here, the term “bare” is useful so that one could distinguish it from the derived stem. It can also be called the “basic” stem. A mutated stem is a bare stem which has changed its shape for grammatical reasons. Stem mutation is discussed below. A derived stem is that which contains a bare or mutated stem and a second stem or a grammatical affix. The compound stem, which consists of a basic stem and a second stem is, indeed, a derived stem.

Grammatically, these stems can be classified thus: the bare stem, the oblique stem, the non-oblique stem, the past stem, the non-past stem, the passive stem, and the causative/effective stem.<sup>5</sup> Affixes are added to these stems in order to perform various grammatical tasks.

---

<sup>4</sup> It must be noted, however, that in classical Tamil some adjectival bases show verb-like quality: e.g., *val* ‘to have strength, to be able’; *pirintu āṇṭu uṟaital valliṭṭōr* ‘he who was able to depart and stay there’ (*naṟṟ.358:12*). Adjectives like *periya* ‘big’ and *ciṟiya* ‘small’ do contain the oldest past/completive marker *i* and the adjectival participle suffix *a*. One might consider \**val* ‘capable’, \**per* ‘big, large’, \**ciṟ* ‘small, little’, and similar items as verb roots which lost their productivity in this period.

<sup>5</sup> Many bare stems function as nouns and verbs in classical Tamil: e.g., *malar* ‘to unfold (as a flower)’ (*puṟa.103:3*) or ‘flower(s)’ (*naṟṟ.398:10*). The literary context and the suffixes added to the stem indicate whether the latter is to be interpreted as a noun or a verb.

The oblique stem and the others are discussed elsewhere in this study.

### Stem Mutation

“Mutation” refers to the change that takes place within the bare stem. The kinds of changes observed in classical Tamil are described next under three headings: (a) lengthening the vowel in the first syllable; (b) shortening the vowel in the first syllable or reducing a consonant; and (c) doubling or hardening certain consonants.

**Lengthening the Vowel in the First Syllable:** This phenomenon is observed in nouns derived from verb stems, in adjectival stems entering into a morphophonemic process, and in certain verb stems entering into a conjugation. Examples:

<b>maru</b> ‘to be different’ > <b>māru</b> ‘difference’	( <i>malai</i> :62)
<b>keṭu</b> ‘to destroy, perish’ > <b>kēṭu</b> ‘loss of wellbeing’	( <i>narr</i> .359:6)
<b>poru</b> ‘to fight’ > <b>pōr</b> ‘fighting’	( <i>aka</i> .316:7)
<b>vaṭa</b> ‘northern’ > <b>vāṭai</b> ‘north wind’	( <i>narr</i> .312:9)
<b>karu</b> ‘dark’ > <b>kār</b> aṇal ‘dark throat’	( <i>narr</i> .181:1)
<b>ve</b> ‘to steam’ > <b>vēvatu</b> ‘it will steam up’	( <i>kali</i> .142:54)

**Shortening the Vowel in the First Syllable or Reducing a Consonant:** Long vowels become short, mostly to derive the oblique forms of personal pronouns. This change happens rarely in verb conjugation. The reduction of a consonant happens for metrical reasons. Examples:

<b>tān</b> ‘he’ > <b>tan</b> ‘his’	( <i>pura</i> .36:9)
<b>kāṇ</b> ‘see’ > <b>kaṇṭu</b> ‘having seen’ <sup>6</sup>	( <i>aka</i> .16:11)

---

<sup>6</sup> This is the only verb which changes in this manner. Note that it does not change in every context: e.g., **kāṇṭirō** (*aka*.275:19). Some might consider the verbs **vā** ‘to come’

**manna** ‘to ponder; think about’

> **mana** ‘to think about’

(*pari.20:70*)

[Note the reduction **nn** > **n**.]

**annai** ‘mother’ > **ani** ‘mother’

(*aink.156:5*)

[Note the reduction **nn** > **n**.]

**Hardening/Doubling Certain Consonants in the Stem:** One consonantal sound or two adjacent consonantal sounds which are not already “hardened,” that is, which are not **kk**, **cc**, **ṭṭ**, **tt**, **pp**, or **rr**, are “hardened” in certain contexts.<sup>7</sup> The corresponding “unhardened” and “hardened” sounds are given below first; how and on what occasions such hardening occurs is mentioned subsequently.

---

and **tā** ‘to give’ to have undergone this kind of change in their conjugations. But it is quite conceivable that the roots of these verbs contain short vowels (**\*var** and **\*tar**). In this study, the “roots” **vā** and **tā** are construed as **var** and **tar** respectively.

<sup>7</sup> A synthetic approach is followed here to explain stem mutation. The phenomena discussed here under “hardening” have been treated in various ways by many scholars at various times. An attempt is made here to bring those various analyses under a convenient rubric without harming their spirit and integrity. One good example of how a part of this phenomenon was treated is Caldwell’s approach (1976:452). Caldwell says, “Intransitive themes become transitive by the hardening and doubling of the consonant of the appended formative - e.g., *peru-gu*, to abound, by this process becomes *peru-kku*, to increase (actively) to cause to abound.” Another example is how Tamil grammatical tradition explains the change in certain nouns ending with **m**. Certain nouns ending with **m** change their stem-final (**m**) to **tt** before taking a case marker, and this phenomenon is explained in the tradition as adding the inflectional increment **attu** to the stem after deleting the stem-final **m**. This study prefers to understand it as a “hardening” process.

Another way to describe these “hardened” sounds is to say that they are “obstruents.” Note that **ṛṛ** (ṛṛ) is treated here as “hard” or “obstruent” because **ṛ** (ṛ) was an “obstruent” in this period, not a “trill” as in modern Tamil, where the combination **ṛṛ** is pronounced as “ṛṛ” (retroflex stop + trill) or “ṛṛ” (alveolar stop + trill), similar to the first syllable in the English word “train.”

“unhardened” sound	“hardened” sound
k	kk
ṅk	kk
c	cc
c	ñc
ṭ	ṭṭ
ṇ	ṭṭ
ṇṭ	ṭṭ
t	tt
nt	tt
p	pp
m	tt <sup>8</sup>
m	pp <sup>9</sup>
mp	pp
y	rr <sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The rationale for setting up this correspondence is that non-monosyllabic nouns ending with **m** have oblique forms ending with **tt**. As pointed out above, traditional grammarians and commentators call this **tt** as the **attu-c-cāriyai** “the augment **attu**” (Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, Ḵampūraṇam, Rules 120 and 126; Naṇṇūl, Rules 244 and 252).

<sup>9</sup> The rationale for setting up this correspondence is the connection between **tīrum** ‘to turn’ (intransitive) and **tīruppu** ‘to turn’ (transitive). The word **\*tīrum** as such is not attested in classical Tamil, but **ṣ** listed as a verb stem in Naṇṇūl, Rule 137. Naṇṇūl does not give the meaning of **tīrum**, but one could make an educated guess that it means ‘to turn around’ (intransitive), whereas **tīruppu** means ‘to turn ... around’ (causative/effective). This verb **\*tīrum** and **\*irum** ‘to cough’ are the only two classical Tamil verbs which end with **m**.

<sup>10</sup> This correspondence is made here because the neuter plural demonstrative pronouns and their oblique forms manifest it: e.g., **avai** ‘those things’ > **avarṛ** ... (oblique). The

<b>l</b>	<b><u>nr</u></b>
<b>v</b>	<b>pp</b>
<b>l</b>	<b>tt</b>
<b>l</b>	<b>tt</b>
<b>r</b>	<b>rr</b>
<b><u>n</u></b>	<b><u>rr</u></b> <sup>11</sup>
<b><u>nr</u></b>	<b>rr</b>

Where in the Stem Does This “Hardening” Occur: (a) In the stem-final consonant of monosyllabic or disyllabic stems. Examples:

<b>tin</b> ‘eat’	:	<b>tirru</b> ‘feed’
<b>uṇ</b> ‘eat’	:	<b>ūtṭu</b> ‘feed’
<b>kāṇ</b> ‘see’	:	<b>kāṭṭu</b> ‘show/make see’
<b>pūṇ</b> ‘wear’	:	<b>pūṭṭu</b> ‘make wear’
<b>tuyil</b> ‘sleep’	:	<b>tuyirru</b> ‘make (someone) sleep’
<b>uruḷ</b> ‘roll over’	:	<b>uruṭṭu</b> ‘make (someone/something) roll’
<b>mūḷ</b> ‘emerge/start’	:	<b>mūṭṭu</b> ‘make (something) emerge/start’

(b) In the penultimate consonant if the stem has more than one syllable and the penultimate syllable is closed. Examples:

**mayāṅku** ‘to be confused’ : **mayakku** ‘confusion’

---

endings **ai** (in **avai**) and **y** (in **\*avay**) are interchangeable.

Traditional grammarians and commentators call this **rr** the **varru-c-cāriyai** “the augment **varru**” or **arru-c-cāriyai** “the augment **arru**” (Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, ḷampūraṇam, Rules 120 and 123; Naṇṇūḷ, Rules 244 and 250).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, ḷampūraṇam, Rule 122, which recognizes this kind of “hardening.”

<b>añcu</b> ‘to fear’	:	<b>accu</b> ‘fear’
<b>varuntu</b> ‘grieve, suffer’	:	<b>varuttu</b> ‘make grieve/suffer’
<b>muntai</b> ‘previous’	:	<b>muttai</b> ‘previously’
<b>ōmpu</b> ‘recede, shield’	:	<b>ōppu</b> ‘make recede, prevent’
<b>tōnru</b> ‘appear’	:	<b>tōrru</b> ‘make appear’

(c) In the last consonant of non-monosyllabic stems with open syllables.  
Examples:

<b>peruku</b> ‘to increase/multiply’	:	<b>perukku</b> ‘abundance’
<b>ēru</b> ‘to climb up’	:	<b>ērru</b> ‘to cause ... to climb up’
<b>cuṭu</b> ‘bake’	:	<b>cūṭṭu</b> ‘baked meat’
<b>vayiru</b> ‘abdominal area/stomach’	:	<b>vayirru</b> ‘of the stomach’

On What Occasions Does This “Hardening/Doubling” Occur: The hardening/doubling of a consonant occurs when deriving some nouns, adjectival stems, causative/effective stems, and oblique bases for producing compound nouns and case forms. Examples:

<b>ēru</b> ‘ascend’:	<b>ērrai</b> ‘male of an animal (that ascends its female)’	[verbal noun]
<b>maru</b> ‘other: <b>marrai</b> yōr ‘others’ [adjectival stem: <b>marr</b> ]		
<b>pin</b> ‘back’:	<b>pirrai</b> <i>nilai</i> ‘backward state’ [adjectival stem: <b>pirr</b> ]	
<b>tuyil</b> ‘sleep’:	<b>tuyirru</b> ‘make ... sleep’ [causative stem: <b>tuyirr</b> ]	
<b>mayanku</b> ‘be confused’:	<b>mayakku</b> ‘confusion’	
	[causative stem: <b>mayakk</b> ]	

**puku** 'enter' + **il** 'place, residence'

> **pukk** oblique + **il** > **pukkil** 'entered place/refuge'

[generating an oblique base from a verb stem for deriving a compound noun]

**tuñcu** 'sleep' + **il** 'place, residence'

> **tucc** oblique + **il** > **tuccil** 'resting place'

[generating an oblique base from a verb stem for deriving a compound noun]

**aṭu** 'to cook; kill' + **il** 'place, house'

> **aṭṭ** oblique + **il** > **aṭṭil** 'cooking place'

[generating an oblique base from a verb stem for deriving a compound noun]

**pacu** 'fresh, lively' + **irā** 'shrimp, prawn'

> **pacc** oblique + **irā** > **paccirā** 'fresh shrimp, prawn'

[generating an oblique base from an adjectival stem for deriving a compound noun]

**putu** 'new, fresh' + **akal** 'shallow container'

> **putt** oblique + **akal** > **puttakal** 'fresh shallow container'

[generating an oblique base from an adjectival stem for deriving a compound noun]

**kuḷampu** 'hoof' + **vali** 'path'

> **kuḷappu** oblique + **vali** > **kuḷappu vali** 'path tread by the hooves'

[generating an oblique base from a noun for deriving a compound noun]

**tol** 'ancient, established' + **icai** 'fame, reputation'

> **tonr** oblique + **icai** > **tonricai** 'established reputation'

[generating an oblique base from an adjectival stem for deriving a compound noun]

**vayiru** 'abdominal area' + **tī** 'fire'

> **vayirru** oblique + **tī** > **vayirrutī** 'fire in the stomach; hunger'

[generating an oblique base from a nominal stem for deriving a compound noun]

**kanru** 'calf' + **uri** 'hide'

> **karru** oblique + **uri** > **karruri** 'hide of a calf'

[generating an oblique base from a nominal stem for deriving a compound noun]

**maram** 'tree' + **āl** case marker

> **maratt** + **āl** > **marattāl** 'onto the tree, by the tree'

[generating an oblique base from a nominal stem for deriving a case form]

## Changes Across Stems and Affixes

The changes that take place across stems and affixes are described under the following headings: (1) when a stem-final long vowel is followed by a vowel-initial item, (2) when a stem-final long vowel is followed by a consonant-initial item, (3) when a stem-final short vowel (not **u**) is followed by a vowel-initial item, (4) when a stem-final short vowel (not **u**) is followed by a consonant-initial item, (5) when a stem-final short vowel **u** is followed by a vowel-initial item, (6) when a stem-final short vowel **u** is followed by a consonant-initial item, (7) when a stem-final consonant is followed by a vowel-initial item, and (8) when a stem-final consonant is followed by a consonant-initial item.



1. When a stem-final long vowel is followed by a vowel-initial item:

1.1.

The stem is monosyllabic and a verb. The following item is a suffix that does not begin with *i*. The initial vowel of the following suffix is deleted and the stem-final vowel is elongated occasionally for the sake of meter.

<b>ā + um &gt; ām</b>	<i>(kali.58:21)</i>
<b>cā + um &gt; cām</b>	<i>(kali.60:27)</i>
<b>pō + um &gt; pōm</b>	<i>(kali.25:11)</i>
<b>tā + um &gt; tāam</b>	<i>(narr.79:3)</i>
<b>mē + a &gt; mēe</b>	<i>(pari.9:79)</i>

1.2.

The stem is monosyllabic and a verb. The following item is a suffix beginning with *i*. The stem-final vowel does not change. The suffix is added directly to the stem.

<b>cī + i &gt; cīi</b>	<i>(kali.101:8)</i>
<b>kai + i &gt; kaii</b>	<i>(matu.419)</i>
<b>tai + i &gt; taii</b>	<i>(kuri.102)</i>
<b>vai + iya &gt; vaiiya</b>	<i>(narr.12:6)</i>

1.3.

The stem has one or more than one syllable. The following item is a suffix or a word. The stem-final vowel in the monosyllabic stem is lengthened occasionally. In most cases, a glide is inserted between the stem and the following item. If the stem-final vowel is *ā*, *ū*, or *au*, the glide *v* is inserted; if the stem-final vowel is *ī* or *ai*, the glide *y* is inserted except when the initial vowel of the suffix following the stem is *i*; occasionally, the glide *ñ* or *n* is inserted between the

stem-final **ai** and the following suffix that does not begin with **i**; if the stem-final vowel is **ē**, the glide **y** is inserted; if the stem-final vowel is **ō**, the glide **v** is inserted. The glide could be **v** if the non-monosyllabic stem ends with **ai**, and **y** if the monosyllabic stem ends with **ō**.

<b>tū + u + ekkar</b>	<b>&gt; tūu ekkar</b>	( <i>paṭṭ.117</i> )
<b>yā + v + atu</b>	<b>&gt; yāvatu</b>	( <i>narr.119:9</i> )
<b>mā + v + ilaṅkai</b>	<b>&gt; māvilāṅkai</b>	( <i>ciṟu.119</i> )
<b>kā + v + in + em</b>	<b>&gt; kāvinem</b>	( <i>puṛa.206:10</i> )
<b>pā + v + inru</b>	<b>'there is no ...' &gt; pāvinru</b>	( <i>aka.172:18</i> )
<b>ā + v + um</b>	<b>&gt; āvum</b>	( <i>puṛa.9:1</i> )
<b>acā + v + ātu</b>	<b>&gt; acāvātu</b>	( <i>kuṛu.269:1</i> )
<b>tū + v + a</b>	<b>&gt; tūva</b>	( <i>narr.132:4</i> )
(Some might consider the stem to be <b>tūvu</b> .)		
<b>pū + v + uṭaṇ</b>	<b>&gt; pūvuṭaṇ</b>	( <i>puṛa.224:15</i> )
<b>vau + v + i</b>	<b>&gt; vauvi</b>	( <i>matu.149</i> )
(Some might consider the stem to be <b>vauvu</b> .)		
<b>ī + y + ā</b>	<b>&gt; īyā</b>	( <i>pati.19:18</i> )
<b>ī + y + āt + u</b>	<b>&gt; īyātu</b>	( <i>narr.378:2</i> )
<b>tē + y + am</b>	<b>&gt; tēyam</b>	( <i>aka.383:4</i> )
<b>pulai + y + aṇ</b>	<b>&gt; pulaiyaṇ</b>	( <i>narr.77:1</i> )
<b>maṇai + y + uṛai</b>	<b>puṛavu &gt; maṇaiyuṛai puṛavu</b>	( <i>neṭu.45</i> )
<b>pacalai + y + ai</b>	<b>&gt; pacalaiyai</b>	( <i>aiṅk.200:4</i> )
<b>maṛrai + y + ōr</b>	<b>&gt; maṛraiyoṛ<sup>12</sup></b>	( <i>pari.5:45</i> )
<b>urai + i</b>	<b>&gt; uraii</b>	( <i>pati.40:9</i> )

<sup>12</sup> An example where a derived stem **maṛrai** consisting of an adjectival stem (**maṛu** 'other') and a suffix (**ai**) acts as a stem for further addition.

<b>kolai + v + an &gt; kolaivan</b>	( <i>puṛa.152:8</i> )
<b>vilai + v + an &gt; vilaivan</b>	( <i>puṛa.152:9</i> )
<b>valai + ñ + ar &gt; valaiñar</b>	( <i>peru.274</i> )
<b>vinai + n + ar &gt; vinainar</b>	( <i>pati.62:16</i> )
<b>kō + y + il &gt; kōyil</b>	( <i>neṭu.100</i> )
<b>kō + v + inattār &gt; kōvinattār</b>	( <i>kali.107:3</i> )
<b>kō + v + ē &gt; kōvē</b>	( <i>pati.21:23</i> )
<b>iruttalō + v + aritē &gt; iruttalōvaritē<sup>13</sup></b>	( <i>puṛa.210:7</i> )

2. When a stem-final long vowel is followed by a consonant-initial item:

2.1.

The stem is monosyllabic. The following item is a suffix. The stem-final vowel is elongated occasionally for the sake of meter. Otherwise, there is no change.

<b>mā (tree) + a + ttu &gt; māattu</b>	( <i>aka.141:21</i> )
<b>tā + a + y &gt; tāay</b>	( <i>paṭṭ:155</i> )
<b>kū 'to call out' + u + y &gt; kūuy</b>	( <i>poru.101</i> )
<b>ē 'to command' + e + y &gt; ēey</b>	( <i>puṛa.341:9</i> )
<b>pō + o + y + a &gt; pōoya</b>	( <i>kali.134:7</i> )
<b>yā + tu &gt; yātu</b>	( <i>aka.48:13</i> )
<b>mā 'animal' + tta &gt; mātta</b>	( <i>pati.67:16</i> )
<b>mā (tree) + tt + in &gt; mātтин</b>	( <i>aka.306:4</i> )
<b>pā + y + in + tu &gt; pāyinru</b>	( <i>aka.85:15</i> )
<b>kū 'to call out' + y &gt; kūy</b>	( <i>kali.38:8</i> )

<sup>13</sup> An example where a derived stem consisting of a bare stem (*iru* 'to remain') and two suffixes (*ttal* and *ō*) acts as a stem for further addition.

**pū + kka > pūkka** (*pura.21:13*)

**pō + y + a > pōya** (*kali.143:39*)

## 2.2.

The stem is monosyllabic but not an adjective. The following item is a word, not a suffix.

The stem-final vowel is elongated for metrical reasons. Subsequently, the initial consonant of the noun following the stem is doubled if the stem does not refer to a tree. But, if the stem refers to a tree or begins with a nasal, a nasal homorganic with the initial consonant of the item following the stem is inserted between the stem and the following item whether the stem-final vowel is elongated or not.

When the stem-final vowel is not elongated, the initial consonant of the following item is optionally doubled and this process is certain when the stem and the following item produce a compound noun.

**mā + a + n + taḷir > māantaḷir** (*kali.143:27*)

**mē + e + n + tōl > mēentōl** (*aka.3:1*)

**mē + e + n + tōnri > mēentōnri** (*matu.133*)

**cē + e + c + cevi > cēccevi** (*kali.103:51*)

**mā + n + taḷir > māntaḷir** (*pari.8:38*)

**mē + n + tōl > mēntōl** (*pura.321:2*)

**mē + n + tōnri > mēntōnri** (*pati.89:12*)

**ā + k + kural > ākkural** (*pura.362:8*)

**ī + t + torum > ittorum** (*pati.61:13*)

**tū + t + tirai > tūttirai** (*kurū.55:1*)

**vai + t + talai > vaittalai** (*pati.44:18*)

**tai + n + nīr > tainnīr** (*pari.11:115*)

<b>pai + p + paya &gt; paippaya</b> <sup>14</sup>	( <i>aka.106:3</i> )
<b>kai + m + makavu &gt; kaimmakavu</b>	( <i>pari.15:47</i> )
<b>pō + t + tantu &gt; pōttantu</b>	( <i>narr.80:4</i> )
<b>tū + maṇal &gt; tūmaṇal</b>	( <i>kuru.51:3</i> )
<b>pai + paya &gt; paipaya</b>	( <i>narr.306:1</i> )
<b>pō + taru(m) &gt; pōtaru(m)</b>	( <i>aka.52:8</i> )

## 2.3.

The stem is monosyllabic and an adjective: **mā** 'big, dark', **tī** 'sweet', **mī** 'rising', **pū** 'soft', **tē** 'sweet, pleasant', **pē** 'awesome, frightening', **ai** 'soft, five', **pai** 'broad, wide', **mai** 'dark, black', and **vai** 'sharp.' The following item is a noun.

The stem-final vowel is elongated for the meter. Subsequently, the initial consonant of the following item (if it is **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p**) would be doubled again for meter. If the initial consonant of the item following the noun is a nasal or a semi-vowel, there is no change in the form of doubling.

If the stem-final is not elongated, different adjectives behave differently, and in most cases, a nasal homorganic with the initial consonant of the noun following the stem is inserted between the stem and the noun.<sup>15</sup>

<b>mā + a + t + tāḷ &gt; māattāḷ</b>	( <i>matu:178</i> )
<b>mā + a + kāviri &gt; māa kāviri</b>	( <i>paṭṭ:116</i> )

<sup>14</sup> This example is a "doublet." A word formed by duplicating the stem is here called a "doublet." Regarding the doubling of the word-initial consonant of the item following the stem in such cases, compare modern Tamil forms like **cīccī** < **cī** + **cī** and **tūttū** < **tū** + **tū**, which are expressions of contempt.

<sup>15</sup> Some might consider the nasal **m** to be present intrinsically as the stem-final of these adjectival stems.

<b>tū + u + neñcam &gt; tūuneñcam</b> <sup>16</sup>	( <i>kuṛu.157:2</i> )
<b>pē + e + viḷavu &gt; pēeviḷavu</b>	( <i>pari.5:14</i> )
<b>mā + k + kal &gt; mākkal</b>	( <i>aka.392:18</i> )
<b>mā + tavar &gt; mātavār</b>	( <i>pari.5:38</i> )
<b>mā + nilam &gt; mānilam</b>	( <i>naṛṛ.ka.vā:1</i> )
<b>tī + ṇ + kaṇi &gt; tīṇkaṇi</b>	( <i>puṛa.281:1</i> )
<b>tī + n + tayir &gt; tīntayir</b>	( <i>aka.87:1</i> )
<b>tī + m + puṇal &gt; tīmpuṇal</b>	( <i>naṛṛ.70:7</i> )
<b>tī + neñcam &gt; tīneñcam</b>	( <i>pari.5:73</i> )
<b>mī + k + kūṛrattu &gt; mīkkūṛrattu</b>	( <i>ciṛu.212</i> )
<b>mī + p + pāl &gt; mīppāl</b>	( <i>pari.10:79</i> )
<b>mī + nīr &gt; mīnīr</b>	( <i>pari.21:40</i> )
<b>pū + ṇ + kuḷai &gt; pūṇkuḷai</b>	( <i>poru.30</i> )
<b>tē + k + kokku &gt; tēkkokku</b>	( <i>kuṛu.26:6</i> )
<b>ai + ṇ + kai &gt; aiṇkai</b>	( <i>pari.3:37</i> )
<b>pai + ñ + cunai &gt; paiñcunai</b>	( <i>tiru.253</i> )
<b>pai + ñ + ñilam &gt; paiññilam</b> <sup>17</sup>	( <i>pati.17:9</i> )
<b>mai + m + mīṇ &gt; maimmīṇ</b>	( <i>puṛa.117:1</i> )
<b>vai + n + nuti &gt; vainnuti</b>	( <i>puṛa.288:1</i> )

## 2.4.

The stem has more than one syllable. The following item is a suffix. There is no change.

<b>vāḷai + kku &gt; vāḷaikku</b>	( <i>aka.126:8</i> )
<b>mutumai + kku &gt; mutumaikku</b>	( <i>pari.2:17-18</i> )

<sup>16</sup> This form is attested in the anthologies edited by Vaiyapuri Pillai.

<sup>17</sup> The initial consonant of *nilam* 'earth' is changed ("palatalized") to *ñ* because of the stem-final *ai*, which is a palatal vowel. Accordingly, the homorganic nasal inserted between the stem and the following noun is also a palatal.

**amai + ti > amaiti** (pari.4:71)

**mutalai + ttu > mutalaittu** (aink.24:2)

### 2.5.

The stem has more than one syllable. The following item is a verb form or a nominal. If the stem-final vowel is *ā*, it is elongated. In all cases, the initial consonant of the following item is doubled, if it is *k*, *c*, *t*, or *p*.

**takā + a + t + takā > takāattakā** (pari.8:57)

(Note that *takā* is a derived stem from *taku*. The *ā* in *takā* is a negative suffix.)

**miṭā + a + c + conri > miṭāacconri** (kuri:201)

**māmai + k + kaḷaṅkaṇi > māmaikkaḷaṅkaṇi** (malai:35-36)

**niṇai + t + torum > niṇaittorum** (kuri:251)

**naṭalai + p + paṭṭu > naṭalaippaṭṭu** (kali.95:33)

**vaḷai + naral > vaḷainaral** (narr.ka.vā:1)

### 3. When a stem-final short vowel (not *u*) is followed by a vowel-initial item:

#### 3.1.

The stem is monosyllabic and the following item is a suffix or a nominal.

When the stem is the deictic *a*, *i*, or *e*, the glide *v* is inserted between the stem and the following suffix, whereas the glide *vv* is inserted when the following item is a noun.

When the stem is not a deictic and the following item is a suffix, the glide is *yy* if the item following the stem is an adjectival/participial noun suffix; the glide is *vv* if the item following the stem is not an adjectival/participial noun suffix. Instead of inserting the glide *vv*

between the stem and the following item, another type of change is possible; that is, to lengthen the stem-final vowel and insert subsequently the glide *y* before an item beginning with the vowel *i* and insert the glide *v* before an item beginning with any other vowel. No such glide is inserted when the suffix following the stem is **um**, but the initial vowel of the suffix is deleted.

<b>a + v + aṇ &gt; avan</b>	( <i>poru</i> .64)
<b>i + v + aḷ &gt; ivaḷ</b>	( <i>kuṛi</i> .248)
<b>e + v + aḷ &gt; evaḷ</b>	( <i>pari</i> .6:91)
<b>a + vv + āyam &gt; avvāyam</b>	( <i>kali</i> .136:7)
<b>i + vv + ulakam &gt; ivvulakam</b>	( <i>kuṛu</i> .273:7)
<b>ce + yy + aṇ &gt; ceyyan</b>	( <i>tiru</i> .206)
<b>ce + yy + ōḷ &gt; ceyyōḷ</b>	( <i>aka</i> .316:13)
<b>ve + yy + aṇ &gt; veyyan</b>	( <i>kali</i> .75:10)
<b>ve + yy + ōṇ &gt; veyyōṇ</b>	( <i>pari</i> .8:67)
<b>no + yy + āṛ &gt; noyyār</b>	( <i>kali</i> .24:16)
<b>ce + vv + aṇ &gt; cevvan</b>	( <i>narr</i> .277:3)
<b>ve + vv + ar &gt; vevvar</b>	( <i>pati</i> .41:20)
<b>o + vv + ā &gt; ovvā</b>	( <i>pari</i> .11:72)
<b>no + vv + al &gt; novval</b>	( <i>aka</i> .98:22)
<b>no + vv + iyal &gt; novviyal</b>	( <i>aka</i> .388:11)
<b>a + y + iṭai &gt; āyiṭai</b>	( <i>kuṛi</i> .137)
<b>ce + y + itaḷ &gt; cēyitaḷ</b>	( <i>ciṛu</i> .75)
<b>ce + y + irā &gt; cēyirā</b>	( <i>narr</i> .31:2)
<b>no + y + iyar &gt; nōyiyar</b>	( <i>aka</i> .25:16)
<b>ce + v + aṭi &gt; cēvaṭi</b>	( <i>aka</i> .89:18)



<b>v e + v + ai &gt; vēvai</b>	( <i>poru.104</i> )
<b>no + v + al &gt; nōval</b> ‘Do not grieve’	( <i>aka.25:16</i> )
<b>no + v + al &gt; nōval</b> ‘I am grieving’	( <i>aka.63:3</i> )
<b>no + v + ēn &gt; nōvēn</b> ‘I am not grieving’	( <i>aka.63:3</i> )

<b>v e + um &gt; vēm</b>	( <i>kuru.102:1</i> )
<b>no + um &gt; nōm</b>	( <i>narṛ.118:11</i> )

## 3.2.

The stem has two open syllables with short vowels. The following item is a suffix.

The stem-final vowel is lengthened occasionally. The stem-final vowel **a** is lengthened to **ā** preceding an item beginning with **a/ā**, and to **ai** preceding an item beginning with **i**. The stem-final vowel **i** is lengthened to **ī** or **ai** preceding a suffix beginning with **i**. Subsequently there are the following possibilities: the glide **v** is inserted between the stem and the following suffix; no glide is inserted and a vowel cluster emerges as a result of joining the stem and the following item; no glide is inserted and the initial vowel of the item following the stem is deleted.

If the stem-final is not lengthened, a glide **k**, **y**, or **v**, is inserted between the stem and the following item.

<b>kaṭa + v + a &gt; kaṭāva</b>	( <i>tiru.110</i> )
<b>kaṭa + v + ā &gt; kaṭāvā</b>	( <i>pati.70:6</i> )
<b>para + v + al &gt; parāval</b>	( <i>pati.71:22</i> )
<b>tuḷa + v + um &gt; tuḷāvum</b>	( <i>kali.145:43</i> )
<b>maka + ar &gt; makāaar</b>	( <i>puṛa.291:1</i> )
<b>maka + ar &gt; makāar</b>	( <i>ciṛu.56</i> )
<b>vaṭa + atu &gt; vaṭāatu</b>	( <i>aka.59:3</i> )
<b>kuṇa + atu &gt; kuṇāatu</b>	( <i>aka.90:9</i> )

<b>puta + am &gt; putāam</b>	( <i>puṛa.391:16</i> )
<b>pula + al &gt; pulāal</b>	( <i>aka.270:2</i> )
<b>kaṭa + iya &gt; kaṭaiiya</b>	( <i>puṛa.7:1</i> )
<b>ira + iya &gt; iraiiya</b>	( <i>pati.52:11</i> )
<b>kala + i &gt; kalaii</b>	( <i>aka.266:5</i> )
<b>tuḷa + i &gt; tuḷaii</b>	( <i>malai:181</i> )
<b>ciṇa + i + y + a &gt; ciṇaiiya</b>	( <i>kuṛi:229</i> )
<b>viṇa + i &gt; viṇaii</b>	( <i>aka.300:15</i> )
<b>kuvī + i &gt; kuvaii</b>	( <i>peru:104</i> )
<b>kaṭi + iyar &gt; kaṭīiyar</b>	( <i>narr.134:4</i> )
<b>maka + ar &gt; makār</b>	( <i>malai:217</i> )
<b>pula + al &gt; pulāl<sup>18</sup></b>	( <i>narr.202:1</i> )
<b>vaya + um &gt; vayāam</b>	( <i>aiṅk.51:2</i> )
<b>maka + k + ir &gt; makakir</b>	( <i>puṛa.388:10</i> )
<b>muṭi + y + ā &gt; muṭiyā</b>	( <i>pari.8:42</i> )
<b>pari + y + ū &gt; pariyū</b>	( <i>pari.7:72</i> )
<b>eṛi + y + ar &gt; eṛiyar</b>	( <i>pati.52:22</i> )
<b>kaṭa + v + a &gt; kaṭava</b>	( <i>aiṅk.237:1</i> )
<b>pula + v + a &gt; pulava</b>	( <i>aka.8:7</i> )
<b>para + v + al &gt; paraval</b>	( <i>pari.10:116</i> )
<b>pula + v + al &gt; pulaval</b>	( <i>narr.63:3</i> )
<b>kiḷa + v + aṇ &gt; kiḷavan</b>	( <i>puṛa.152:11</i> )
<b>kaṭa + v + āt + ōr &gt; kaṭavātōr</b>	( <i>aka.279:5</i> )
<b>kala + v + āt + u &gt; kalavātu</b>	( <i>pari.20:19</i> )
<b>kala + v + i &gt; kalavi</b>	( <i>pari.8:119</i> )
<b>ciṇa + v + i + y + a &gt; ciṇaviya</b>	( <i>narr.100:6</i> )

<sup>18</sup> Cf. The anthologies edited by Vaiyapuri Pillai.

**viṇa + v + i > viṇavi** (narr.365:4)  
**tuḷa + v + um > tuḷavum** (narr.267:4)  
**kiḷa + v + ōy + ē > kiḷavōyē** (pati.54:17)

## 3.3

The stem has two open syllables with short vowels and is not an adjective. The following item is a suffix. The stem-final vowel is deleted. The consonant preceding the deleted stem-final is doubled if it is **ṭ** or **t**.<sup>19</sup>

**mata + am > mattam** (peru:156)  
**vaṭi 'to sift; bend' + i > vaṭṭi** (narr.210:3)

## 3.4

The stem has two open syllables with short vowels and may be an adjective. The following item is a word, not a suffix.

When the item following the stem is a nominal, the stem-final vowel is lengthened, and subsequently, there are these possibilities: the lengthened stem-final vowel may be further elongated for the sake of meter and the initial vowel of the nominal is deleted; the glide **v** is inserted between the stem and the following nominal without deleting the initial vowel of the nominal whether the lengthened stem-final vowel is elongated or not

If the word following the stem is not a noun, there is no change to the stem-final vowel, and the glide **v** is inserted between the stem and the following item.

**vaḷa + akam > vaḷākam** (pura.189:1)

<sup>19</sup> A new approach is followed here to explain the examples given in this paragraph. Some might consider **mattam** and **vaṭṭi** to be given lexical items. Theoretically, the other consonants which could precede the stem-final are **k**, **c**, **p**, and **ṛ**.

**muḷa + arai > muḷārai** (pati.pati.5:14)

**vaḷa + akam > vaḷāakam** (kali.146:28)

**muḷa + v + arai > muḷāvarai** (pura.85:7)

**pula + v + ampu > pulāavampu** (pura.181:5)

**uva + v + iṇi > uvaviṇi** (aka.65:7)

### 3.5.

The stem has more than one syllable. The disyllabic stem has a long vowel and/or a closed syllable. The following item is a suffix. A glide is inserted between the stem and the following item. The glide is **v** if the stem-final vowel is **a**, and **y** if the stem-final vowel is **i**.<sup>20</sup>

**nalla + v + ai > nallavai** (pari.20:74)

**mēni + y + oṭu > mēniyoṭu** (kuru.33:3)

**piravi + y + ai > piraviyai** (pari.5:12)

**vaḷli + y + ai > vaḷliyai** (pati.54:1)

### 3.6.

The stem has more than one syllable. The disyllabic stem has a long vowel and/or a closed syllable. The following item is a word. The stem-final vowel is often deleted or a glide is inserted between the stem and the following item. The glide is **v** if the stem-final vowel is **a**, and **y** if the stem-final vowel is **i**.

**vāḷka + avan tāḷē > vāḷkavan tāḷē** (pura.70:19)

**vayaṅka + iṭṭu > vayaṅkiṭṭu** (kali.55:2)

**iruka + irukki > irukiṛukki** (pari.12:59)

**enra + ūḷa > enrūḷa** (aink.374:1)

<sup>20</sup> The doubled **v** in instances like **ariyavvē < ariya + vv + ē** (narr.23:9), instead of **ariyavē** is due to metrical requirement. For a note on metrical requirement, see “Lengthening of Sounds (aḷapeṭai) and Vowel Clusters.”

<b>koḷka + eṇa &gt; koḷkeṇa</b>	( <i>pura.143:1</i> )
<b>tarikka + eṇa &gt; tarikkeṇa</b>	( <i>pari.5:40</i> )
<b>arunta + ēmānta &gt; aruntēmānta</b>	( <i>pura.101:9</i> )
<b>kanri + iṭin &gt; kanriṭin</b>	( <i>pari.6:98</i> )
<b>arunti + ukaḷa &gt; aruntukaḷa</b>	( <i>aka.14:6</i> )
<b>vālka + v + avanṇa kanṇi &gt; vālkaṇṇi</b>	( <i>pati.20:5</i> )
<b>ariya + v + alla &gt; ariyavalla<sup>21</sup></b>	( <i>aka.8:5</i> )
<b>vālka + v + enru &gt; vālkaṇru</b>	( <i>pura.34:16</i> )
<b>ūṭṭi + y + anna &gt; ūṭṭiyanna<sup>22</sup></b>	( <i>aka.388:24</i> )
<b>aruvi + y + iḷitarum &gt; aruviyīḷitarum<sup>23</sup></b>	( <i>naṟṟ.347:7</i> )

4. When a stem-final short vowel (not u) is followed by a consonant-initial item:

#### 4.1.

The stem is monosyllabic. The following item is a suffix. There is no change when the stem is a deictic, or when the item following the stem is not an adjectival/participial noun suffix. When the item following the stem is an adjectival/participial noun suffix, two changes are possible: the glide y is inserted between the stem and the suffix or the glide **vv** followed by an enunciative **i** is inserted between the stem and the suffix.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Cf. The anthologies edited by Vaiyapuri Pillai.

<sup>22</sup> Note that **ūṭṭi** is the adverbial participle form of **ūṭṭu** 'to feed.'

<sup>23</sup> Cf. The anthologies edited by Vaiyapuri Pillai.

<sup>24</sup> When the suffix **mai** is added, the glide y changes/assimilates to the initial consonant of the suffix, as for example: **c e + y + mai > cemmai**; **v e + y + mai > vemmai**. One could also analyze these forms differently: **c e + y + m + mai > \*ceymmai > cemmai**; **v e + y + m + mai > \*veymmmai > vemmai**. This would then explain forms like **noymmai** (< **no + y + m + mai**) which occur in later texts.

<b>a + tu &gt; atu</b>	( <i>narr.308:8</i> )
<b>i + tu &gt; itu</b>	( <i>kuri:21</i> )
<b>o + tt + aṇ + ir &gt; ottanir</b>	( <i>aka.26:19</i> )
<b>no + nt + u &gt; nontu</b>	( <i>narr.177:8</i> )
<b>ve + y + tu &gt; veytu</b>	( <i>aka.203:14</i> )
<b>no + y + tu &gt; noytu</b>	( <i>pura.75:10</i> )
<b>ce + vv + i + tu &gt; cevvitu</b>	( <i>pati.22:8</i> )
<b>no + vv + i + tu &gt; novvitu</b>	( <i>narr.315:9</i> )

## 4.2.

The stem is monosyllabic. The following item is a nominal. The initial consonant of the nominal following the stem is doubled. In the case of the stem **no** 'soft, fine', the glide **y** is inserted between the stem and the following noun.

<b>a + k + kaṭal &gt; akkaṭal</b>	( <i>pura.198:19</i> )
<b>a + ñ + ñāṇru &gt; aññāṇru</b>	( <i>kali.19:2</i> )
<b>i + p + paṇai nallūr &gt; ippaṇai nallūr</b>	( <i>pura.351:12</i> )
<b>e + n + nīrirō &gt; ennīrirō</b>	( <i>kuṟu.219:7</i> )
<b>e + v + vaḷi &gt; evvaḷi</b>	( <i>kuṟu.40:3</i> )
<b>no + y + n + nūl<sup>25</sup></b>	( <i>pari.10:10</i> )

<sup>25</sup> Some might consider **noy** as a verb stem meaning 'to become soft.'

## 4.3.

The stem has two open syllables with short vowels. The following item is a suffix. The stem-final vowel **a** is lengthened when the following suffix is **y**. There is no change in other cases.

<b>vaḷa + y &gt; vaḷāy</b>	<i>(pari.11:105)</i>
<b>viṇa + y &gt; viṇāy</b>	<i>(kuri:4)</i>
<b>kuḷa + kku &gt; kuḷakku</b>	<i>(kali.108:21)</i>
<b>naṭa + tt + a &gt; naṭatta</b>	<i>(pari.10:43)</i>
<b>pula + tti &gt; pulatti</b>	<i>(aka.39:25)</i>
<b>kiṭa + pp(i) + i &gt; kiṭappi</b>	<i>(kuru.114:1)</i>
<b>aṇi + kku &gt; aṇikku</b>	<i>(kali.85:17)</i>
<b>kaṇi + cci &gt; kaṇicci</b>	<i>(pati.22:12)</i>
<b>naṇi + ttu &gt; naṇittu</b>	<i>(pari.17:25)</i>
<b>uri + ttu &gt; urittu</b>	<i>(narr.327:7)</i>
<b>uri + tu &gt; uritu</b>	<i>(narr.322:8)</i>
<b>oṭi + vai &gt; oṭivai 'breaking'</b>	<i>(aka.301:5)</i>
<b>aṇi + mati &gt; aṇimati</b>	<i>(pura.161:25)</i>

## 4.4.

The stem has two open syllables with short vowels but is not an adjective. The following item is a word. If the stem refers to a tree other than the jack tree, a nasal homorganic with the initial consonant of the following item is inserted between the stem and the following item. In all other cases, the stem-final vowel is elongated and the initial consonant of the following word is subsequently doubled if it is **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p**.

<b>kaḷa + ṇ + kaṇi &gt; kaḷaṇkaṇi</b>	<i>(malai:36)</i>
---------------------------------------	-------------------

<b>viḷa + m + paḷam &gt; viḷampaḷam</b> <sup>26</sup>	( <i>narr.</i> 12:1)
<b>puḷi + ṇ + kāy &gt; puḷiṇkāy</b> <sup>27</sup>	( <i>aink.</i> 51:3)
<b>kaṭa + a + k + kaḷiru &gt; kaṭāakkaḷiru</b>	( <i>kali.</i> 101:36)
<b>cuṛa + a + k + koṭiyōṇ &gt; cuṛāakkoṭiyōṇ</b> <sup>28</sup>	( <i>kali.</i> 147:42)
<b>pala ‘jack tree’ + a + p + pōla &gt; palāappōla</b> <sup>29</sup>	( <i>peru.</i> 408)
<b>kala + a + t + tānaiyan &gt; kalāattānaiyan</b>	( <i>puṛa.</i> 69:11)
<b>kaṭa + a + yānai &gt; kaṭāayānai</b>	( <i>puṛa.</i> 145:3)

## 4.5.

The stem has two short syllables and is an adjective. The following item is a noun. If the initial consonant of the noun following the stem is **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p**, it is doubled or a homorganic nasal is inserted between the stem and the noun, as in most cases. If the stem is **maḷa** ‘young’, there is no change.

<b>maḷa + kaḷiru &gt; maḷakaḷiru</b>	( <i>narr.</i> 192:2)
<b>maṭa + k + kaṇam &gt; maṭakkaṇam</b>	( <i>narr.</i> 248:8)
<b>taṭa + k + kai &gt; taṭakkai</b>	( <i>tiru.</i> 5)
<b>taṭa + k + kōṭṭu āmāṇ &gt; taṭakkōṭṭu āmāṇ</b>	( <i>aka.</i> 238:7)
<b>puḷi + k + kaḷā &gt; puḷikkaḷā</b>	( <i>puṛa.</i> 177:9)
<b>puḷi + c + cuvai &gt; puḷiccuvai</b>	( <i>narr.</i> 87:4)
<b>taṭa + ṇ + kōṭṭu āmāṇ &gt; taṭaṇkōṭṭu āmāṇ</b>	( <i>narr.</i> 57:1)
<b>paḷa + ṇ + kayiru &gt; paḷaṇkayiru</b>	( <i>narr.</i> 284:10)
<b>naṇa + ṇ + cāral &gt; naṇaṇcāral</b>	( <i>kali.</i> 44:1)
<b>naṇa + n + talai &gt; naṇantalai</b>	( <i>peru.</i> 291)
<b>taṭa + n + tāl &gt; taṭantāl</b>	( <i>narr.</i> 91:4)
<b>iḷa + m + pētai &gt; iḷampētai</b>	( <i>puṛa.</i> 326:2)

<sup>26</sup> Cf. **viḷaviṇ** ... **veḷḷil** (*puṛa.*181:1).

<sup>27</sup> Some might consider this form as derived from **puḷi + am** (augment) + **kāy**.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. **cuṛa vaḷaṇkum** ‘where the sharks move around’ (*poru.*203).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. **paḷavin paḷattuḷ** ‘inside the jack fruit’ (*aka.*292:14).



**maṭa + mayil > maṭa mayil** (*pari.15:40*)

**taṭa + varai > taṭavarai** (*pari.19:23*)

#### 4.6.

The stem has more than one syllable. The disyllabic stem has a long vowel and/or a closed syllable. The following item is a suffix. There is no change.<sup>30</sup>

**kūḷi + kku > kūḷikku** (*kali.101:26*)

**kuruti + ttu > kurutittu** (*pari.12:85*)

**nīṭṭi + tt + a > nīṭṭitta** (*kali.83:6*)

**vaṭṭi + tt + u > vaṭṭittu** (*aka.218:5*)

**manti + kku > mantikku** (*narr.353:6*)

#### 4.7.

The stem has two or more syllables and is not an adjective. The following item is a nominal, but not an adjective. The stem-final vowel does not change. When the stem or the item following the stem is not an adjectival noun or a word of geographic direction, the initial consonant **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p** of the word following the stem is doubled.

**cīraṭi + k + kaṇam koḷ > cīraṭikkaṇaṅkoḷ**<sup>31</sup> (*malai:43-44*)

**kaṭanta + k + kāl > kaṭantakkāl** (*pari.3:54*)

**colla + t + takkār > collattakkār** (*kali.88:5*)

**pañci + p + picir > pañcippicir** (*aka.283:14*)

**kāñci + p + paṇi muṛi > kāñcippaṇi muṛi** (*pura.344:8*)

<sup>30</sup> The word **pāṭṭi** (**pāṇ** + **ti**) ‘bardess’ would be a good example of a stem of this kind, though there is no attestation of it followed by a consonant-initial suffix. Cf. **pāṭṭiyar** (*matu:749*).

<sup>31</sup> An instance where a derived stem (**cīraṭi**) consisting of **cīru** ‘small’ and **aṭi** ‘feet’ acts as a stem for further addition.

<b>kaṭi + p + pakai &gt; kaṭippakai</b>	(malai:22)
<b>iraṭi + p + pommāl &gt; iraṭippommāl</b>	(malai:169)
<b>muḷa + mā (animal) &gt; muḷamā</b>	(aink.364:1)
<b>kaṭi + matil &gt; kaṭimatil</b>	(peru:451)
<b>vañci + muṛram &gt; vañci muṛram</b>	(puṛa.373:24)
<b>kuṭa + kārru &gt; kuṭa kārru</b>	(peru:240)
<b>kuṇa + kuṭa + kaṭal &gt; kuṇa kuṭa kaṭal</b>	(matu:71)
<b>cila + cila &gt; cila cila<sup>32</sup></b>	(pari.12:39)
<b>vaṭa + terku &gt; vaṭa terku</b>	(pati.31:16)
<b>mīḷi + neñcu &gt; mīḷi neñcu</b>	(aka.379:4)
<b>vēṅkaṭa + neṭuvarai &gt; vēṅkaṭa neṭuvarai</b>	(aka.85:9)
<b>pala + pala &gt; pala pala<sup>33</sup></b>	(pari.12:37)
<b>vaṭa + pulam &gt; vaṭa pulam</b>	(puṛa.391:7)
<b>maḷa + pulam &gt; maḷa pulam</b>	(aka.61:12)

## 4.8.

The stem has two or more syllables. The following item is a verb form. The stem-final vowel does not change. The initial consonant of the item following the stem is doubled if it is **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p**. The doubling seems to be optional if the stem-final vowel is **i**.<sup>34</sup>

**vāḷa + c + ceyta nalviṇai > vāḷacceyta nalviṇai** (puṛa.367:10)

<sup>32</sup> Note that *cila* 'a few' is an adjectival noun.

<sup>33</sup> Note that *pala* 'many' is an adjectival noun.

<sup>34</sup> A few grammatical comments are in order. Certain infinitives and affirmative adjectival/relative participles end with **a**, and certain adverbial participles end with **i**. Among them, the infinitives ending with **(kk)a**, and the adverbial participles ending with **i** do trigger the doubling of the initial consonant of the verbal forms following them. On the other hand, adjectival/relative participles which end with **a** or **iya** trigger this kind of doubling only when they precede certain postpositions like **kaṭai**, **kaṇ**, and **kāl**: e.g., **vanta + k + kaṭai**.

<b>viya + t + taku &gt; viyattaku</b>	( <i>pari.9:82</i> )
<b>para + t + tara &gt; parattara</b>	( <i>kali.106:31</i> )
<b>tumiya + p + paṇṇi &gt; tumiya + p + paṇṇi</b>	( <i>aka.45:10</i> )
<b>moḷi + k + koḷinē &gt; moḷikkōḷinē</b>	( <i>naṛṛ.146:11</i> )
<b>paṇi + p + payantana &gt; paṇippayantana</b>	( <i>aiṅk.266:4</i> )
<b>maruḷi + koḷ &gt; maruḷi koḷ</b>	( <i>kali.14:11</i> )
<b>eṛi + t + taru katir &gt; eṛittaru katir</b>	( <i>kali.9:1</i> )
<b>eṛi + tarum &gt; eṛitarum</b>	( <i>kuṛu.110:7</i> )
<b>aṭi + p + paṭa &gt; aṭippaṭa</b>	( <i>aka.209:5</i> )
<b>aṭi + paṭa &gt; aṭipaṭa</b>	( <i>aka.379:25</i> )

## 4.9.

The stem has two or more syllables. The following item is a suffix or a word. The stem-final vowel and the consonant preceding it are deleted in many cases as the process known as haplology. In either situation, the initial consonant of the item following the stem is doubled.

<b>uruva + k + kutti &gt; uruvakkutti</b>	( <i>kuṛu.255:2</i> )
<b>cāva + k + kutti &gt; cākkutti<sup>35</sup></b>	( <i>kali.101:16</i> )
<b>cāva + c + ceyyār &gt; cācceyyār</b>	( <i>naṛṛ.226:2</i> )
<b>maka + k + kaḷ &gt; makkaḷ</b>	( <i>kali.94:22</i> )
<b>maṛaikka + k + koṇṭa &gt; maṛaikkoṇṭa<sup>36</sup></b>	( <i>puṛa.60:11</i> )

<sup>35</sup> Traditional grammars construe the stem to be *cāva* (cf. Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, ḷampūraṇam, Rule 210), hence the present analysis. However, in the case of *cākkutti* and *cācceyyār* (*naṛṛ.226:2*), it is quite conceivable that the stem is *cāya* 'to lose strength, cave in' rather than *cāva* 'to die.' Compare the forms *cāay* (*naṛṛ.14:1*), *cāymār* (*puṛa.166:5*).

<sup>36</sup> It could simply be *maṛai* 'to conceal' + *k* + *koṇṭa* (< *koḷ* 'to take, hold').

## 5. When a stem-final short vowel *u* is followed by a vowel-initial item:

### 5.1.

The stem is monosyllabic. The following item is a suffix. When the resultant form is not a pronoun or numeral adjective, the glide *v* is inserted between the stem and the following item; otherwise, the glide *v* is inserted. The stem-final vowel of the numeral adjective stem is lengthened.

**tu + vv + ā > tuvvā** (pati.60:12)

(Some might consider the stem to be **tuvvu**.)

**u + v + a| > uva|** (pari.11:123)

**u + v + an > uvaṇ** (narr.127:3)

**mu + v + ir > mūvir** (pura.109:2)

### 5.2.

The stem is monosyllabic. The following item is a nominal. The stem-final vowel is lengthened and the glide *v* is inserted between the stem and the following item.

**mu + v + uru > mūvuru** (pari.13:37)

**mu + v + iru 'twice' > mūviru 'two times three'** (tiru.103)

### 5.3.

The stem has two open syllables with short vowels. The following item is a suffix. In most cases, the glide *v* is inserted between the stem and the following item. The glide (*k*)*k* or *m* is inserted rarely if the consonant preceding the stem-final is *l*. When the stem is a non-rational pronoun and the suffix is a case/oblique marker, the stem-final vowel is deleted.

**ka|lu + v + a > ka|uva** (aka.272:2)

**putu + v + ar > putuvar** (narr.393:12)

<b>iru + v + ar &gt; iruvar</b>	( <i>tiru</i> :178)
<b>katu + v + al &gt; katuval</b>	( <i>aka</i> .8:3)
<b>ciṛu + v + ar &gt; ciṛuvar</b>	( <i>naṛr</i> .330:9)
<b>iru ‘two’ + v + ām &gt; iruvām ‘we two’</b>	( <i>kuṛu</i> .237:4)
<b>iru ‘to pound’ + v + ām &gt; iruvām ‘Let us pound ...’</b>	( <i>kali</i> .41:3)
<b>katu + v + iya &gt; katuviya</b>	( <i>peru</i> :287)
<b>kuḷu + v + iṇ + a &gt; kuḷuviṇa</b>	( <i>naṛr</i> .367:5)
<b>paṭu + v + il &gt; paṭuvil</b>	( <i>aka</i> .79:3)
<b>keḷu + v + u &gt; keḷuvu</b>	( <i>pari</i> .6:6)
<b>atu ‘it’ + v + ē (particle) &gt; atuvē</b>	( <i>aka</i> .218:17)
<b>putu + v + ōr &gt; putuvōr</b>	( <i>malai</i> :288)
<b>mutu + v + ōr &gt; mutuvōr</b>	( <i>ciṛu</i> :231)
<b>maḷu + k + a &gt; maḷuka</b>	( <i>pari</i> .6:16)
<b>iḷu + kk + i &gt; iḷukki</b>	( <i>aka</i> .107:14)
<b>iḷu + k + i &gt; iḷuki</b>	( <i>pura</i> .281:3)
<b>maḷu + k + i &gt; maḷuki</b>	( <i>pura</i> .377:12)
<b>kuḷu + m + a &gt; kuḷuma</b>	( <i>matu</i> :677)
<b>peru + m + āṇ &gt; perumāṇ</b>	( <i>kali</i> .82:21)
<b>keḷu + m + iṇ + a &gt; keḷumiṇa</b>	( <i>pura</i> .345:2)
<b>atu ‘it’ + an &gt; atan</b>	( <i>kuṛi</i> :142)
<b>atu ‘it’ + ai &gt; atai</b>	( <i>pari</i> .11:71)

## 5.4.

The stem has two open syllables with short vowels. It is a verb or rarely an adjective. The following item is a suffix.

In most cases, the stem-final vowel **u** is deleted and the initial vowel of the following suffix is lengthened if it is already not. Further elongation of the stem-final vowel is occasional.

The stem-final **u** changes to **ai** if the following suffix is **i** and the only attested example **vakaii** is given below.

<b>oru + al + iṇ &gt; orālin</b>	( <i>pati.23:17</i> )
<b>naku + al + miṇ &gt; nakānmin</b>	( <i>kali.145:12</i> )
<b>vaḷu + āt + u &gt; vaḷātu</b>	( <i>pura.263:3</i> )
<b>kuḷu + am &gt; kuḷāam</b>	( <i>matu.360</i> )
<b>ciṛu + ar &gt; ciṛāar</b>	( <i>peru.223</i> )
<b>paku + ar &gt; pakāar</b>	( <i>aka.181:22</i> )
<b>viṭu + al &gt; viṭāal</b>	( <i>kali.112:7</i> )
<b>eḷu + al &gt; eḷāal</b>	( <i>poru.56</i> )
<b>iṛu + al + iyarō &gt; iṛāaliyarō</b>	( <i>pati.40:2</i> )
<b>kuḷu + al + iṇ &gt; kuḷāalin</b>	( <i>pati.29:5</i> )
<b>iṭu + ā ēṇi &gt; iṭāa ēṇi</b>	( <i>pati.24:14</i> )
<b>oru + ā nīr &gt; orāanīr</b>	( <i>pati.72:9</i> )
<b>maru + ā yānai &gt; marāa yānai</b>	( <i>aka.13:7</i> )
<b>vaḷu + āt + u &gt; vaḷāatu</b>	( <i>tiru.177</i> )
<b>peru + āṇ &gt; perāan<sup>37</sup></b>	( <i>kuṛi.243</i> )
<b>keḷu + i &gt; keḷīi</b>	( <i>peru.399</i> )
<b>kuḷu + i &gt; kuḷīi</b>	( <i>poru.226</i> )
<b>iru + i &gt; irīi</b>	( <i>tiru.234</i> )
<b>oru + i &gt; orīi</b>	( <i>matu.498</i> )
<b>veru + i &gt; verīi</b>	( <i>tiru.310</i> )
<b>viṭu + īr &gt; viṭīir</b>	( <i>kuṛi.144</i> )
<b>atu + um &gt; atūum</b>	( <i>aka.292:6</i> )
<b>kātu + um &gt; katūum</b>	( <i>kuṛu.8:2</i> )
<b>kaḷu + um cāral &gt; kaḷūum cāral</b>	( <i>narṛ.63:10</i> )
<b>muku + ūu &gt; mukūu</b>	( <i>pari.16:14</i> )
<b>aṭu + ūu niṇṇu &gt; aṭūu niṇṇu</b>	( <i>aka.322:3</i> )

<sup>37</sup> In situations such as this, traditional commentators would posit a negative marker (ā) between the stem and the suffix. Cf. Tolkāppiyam, collatikāram, Cēṇāvaraiyam, Rule 450, where the commentator says that the negative marker is deleted in cases like uṇṇāy 'you will not eat' < uṇ 'eat' + ā negative marker + āy PNG.

**viṭu + ēṇ > viṭēṇ**<sup>38</sup> (narr.350:6)  
**vaku + i > vakaii** (narr.120:5)

## 5.5.

The stem has two open syllables with short vowels. The following item is a word, not suffix. The following changes are possible: the stem-final is deleted and the initial vowel of the following item is lengthened if it is not already long; the stem-final is not deleted, but lengthened and a glide *v* is inserted between the stem and the following item. The stem-final may stay unchanged and the glide *v/k* is inserted between the stem and the following item.

**paru + arai > parārai** (tiru:10)  
**paru + arai > parāarai** (poru:104)  
**atu + anru > atāanru** (tiru:77)  
**paru + ēr eṇḷ > parēr eṇḷ** (paṭṭ:294)  
**itu + ōr > itōr** (kali.104:18)  
**oru + ōr + kai > \*orōorkai > orōokai** (kali.18:9)  
**taḷu + v + aṇi > taḷūuvaṇi** (aka.176:15)  
**paru + v + uṇai > parūuvuṇai** (aka.218:4)  
**atu + v + āyiṇ > atuvāyiṇ** (kali.24:13)  
**taḷu + v + aṇi > taḷuvaṇi** (kuru.294:2)  
**ciṇu + k(u) + iṭaiyār > ciṇukiṭaiyār** (pari.10:106)

## 5.6.

The stem has two open syllables with short vowels. The following item is a suffix or a nominal. The stem-final is deleted and the vowel in the first syllable of the stem is lengthened.

<sup>38</sup> In situations such as this, traditional commentators would posit a negative marker (*ē*) between the stem and the suffix. Cf. Tolkāppiyam, collatikāram, Cēṇāvaraiyam, Rule 450, where the commentator says that the negative marker is deleted in cases like **uṇṇēṇ** 'I will not eat' < **uṇ** 'eat' + *ē* negative marker + **ēṇ** PNG.

<b>itu + ā &gt; ĩtā</b>	( <i>pari.8:60</i> )
<b>ceṛu + ēl + ka &gt; cēṛēṛka</b>	( <i>pari.20:68</i> )
<b>naḷam keḷ(u) + arivai &gt; naḷam kēḷarivai</b>	( <i>kuru.338:8</i> )
<b>pacu + aṭai &gt; pācaṭai</b>	( <i>ciṛu:182</i> )
<b>ciṛu + aṭi &gt; ciṛaṭi</b>	( <i>ciṛu:32</i> )
<b>karu + aṇal &gt; kāraṇal</b>	( <i>narr.181:1</i> )
<b>mutu + ūr &gt; mūtūr</b>	( <i>ciṛu:201</i> )
<b>oru + ūr &gt; ōrūr</b>	( <i>kuru.172:5</i> )
<b>peru + eḷil &gt; pēreḷil</b>	( <i>pura.293:4</i> )
<b>poru + ēṛu &gt; pōrēṛu</b>	( <i>matu:144</i> )
<b>oru + okkum &gt; ōrokkum</b>	( <i>pura.189:6</i> )
<b>oru + oru &gt; ōroru</b>	( <i>kali.141:7</i> )

## 5.7.

The stem has two open syllables with short vowels and is an adjective. The following item is a suffix or a nominal. The stem-final vowel is deleted. Subsequently, one of the following changes occurs: the consonant preceding the stem-final vowel is doubled or hardened,<sup>39</sup> or the vowel *i* is inserted between the stem and the item following it. Consequently, the glide *y* is inserted between the *i* and the following item. In the case of the stem **mutu** ‘old’, another kind of change is possible: after the stem-final is deleted, the consonant preceding the deleted stem-final is doubled and the vowel in the first syllable is lengthened.

<sup>39</sup> See “Stem Mutation,” discussed above, for “hardening.” The word **munṛil** ‘front porch’ can also be considered as derived by the hardening process: **mun** ‘front’ + **il** ‘place’ > **munṛil** > **munṛil**. However, for the hardening to be complete, the expected form is **munnṛil**. See also ḷampūraṇar’s commentary on Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, Rule 356. ḷampūraṇar says that the combination **mun** + **il** ought to result in **munṛil**, but the consonant **ṛ** is added to the stem “unnaturally.”



<b>pacu + irā &gt; paccirā</b>	(peru:270)
<b>pacu + ūn &gt; paccūn</b>	(peru:283)
<b>neṭu + uruṭṭu &gt; neṭṭuruṭṭu</b>	(pari.18:42)
<b>metu + en &gt; metten</b>	(neṭu:37)
<b>putu + akal &gt; puttakal</b>	(aka.86:8)
<b>cīru + ārru &gt; cīrrārru</b>	(kali.108:27)
<b>cīru + il &gt; cīrril</b>	(narr.123:8)
<b>mutu + i + y + ōl &gt; mutiyōl</b>	(pura.277:2)
<b>cīru + i + y + ilai &gt; cīriyilai</b>	(narr.64:5)
<b>paru + i + y + arai &gt; pariyarai</b>	(peru:7)
<b>peru + i + y + atu &gt; periyatu<sup>40</sup></b>	(kali.135:8)
<b>mutu + ōr &gt; mūttōr</b>	(aka.90:1)

## 5.8.

The stem has two open syllables with short vowels and is not an adjective. The following item is a nominalizing suffix or a noun. The stem-final vowel is deleted. The consonant preceding the stem-final is doubled or hardened.

<b>puku ‘to enter’ + il ‘house’ &gt; pukkil</b>	(pura.221:6)
<b>aṭu ‘to cook; kill’ + il ‘place’ &gt; aṭṭil</b>	(cīru:132)
<b>toṭu + i &gt; toṭṭi<sup>41</sup></b>	(pari.20:51)
<b>cetu + ōr &gt; cettōr<sup>42</sup></b>	(pura.240:8)

<sup>40</sup> Some might derive *periyatu* from *periya* ‘big’ + *tu* PNG.

<sup>41</sup> The modern Tamil word *toṭṭil* ‘cradle’ can also be explained by this process: < *toṭu* ‘to hook up’ + *il* ‘place.’

<sup>42</sup> This derivation might seem unusual. Normally, the root of the word *cettōr* ‘carcasses; corpses; those who are dead’ is considered to be *cā*. But this study considers the stem to be *cetu* ‘to rot; lose life.’ Cf. *cetu kāl* ‘rotting/weakening post’ (*aka.63:14*); *cetu-k-kaṇ* ‘lifeless eyes’ (*pura.261:9*); *cetu molī* ‘cutting words of argument’ (*kali.68:3*).

**ceru + am > cerram**

(*matu:490*)

5.9.

The stem has two or more syllables. The disyllabic stem has a closed syllable and/or a long vowel. The following item is a nominalizing suffix or a word. The stem-final vowel is deleted. Subsequently, the consonant preceding the stem-final is doubled or hardened.<sup>43</sup>

But if the stem is an adverbial participle or a verbal noun, an *i* is inserted between the stem and the following item.

**ēku + arra > ēkkaṛra**<sup>44</sup>

(*aka.39:24*)

**tuñcu ‘to sleep/rest’ + il ‘place’ > tuccil**

(*paṭṭ:58*)

**ōṭu + ai > ōṭṭai**<sup>45</sup>

(*pari.12:51*)

**kuvatu + itaiyatu > kuvattitaiyatu**

(*kuṛu.179:7*)

**kōṭu + inattu > kōṭṭinattu**

(*kali.103:33*)

**kōṭu + ai > kōṭṭai**<sup>46</sup>

(*pari.10:57*)

**pakaṭu + ilai > pakaṭṭilai**

(*puṛa.392:13*)

**pāṭu ‘to sing’ + i nominalizing suffix > pāṭṭi**<sup>47</sup>

(*aka.196:4*)

<sup>43</sup> Traditional commentators would normally refer to this process as a kind of hardening (*valittal vikāram*).

<sup>44</sup> An instance where the verb stem *ēku* ‘to leave’ is used to derive a verbal noun *ēkku* ‘leaving.’

<sup>45</sup> The word *ōṭṭai* is normally understood to mean ‘hole.’ This derivation might help one to understand how the word would have obtained the sense ‘hole’:

*ōṭu* ‘to run’ + *ai* verbal noun suffix

> *ōṭṭai* ‘that which lets something run/pass through’

<sup>46</sup> The word *kōṭṭai* is normally understood to mean ‘fortress.’ By this derivation, one could understand its basic sense as ‘that which is crooked/bent.’

*kōṭu* ‘to bend’ + *ai* verbal noun suffix > *kōṭṭai* ‘that which is bent’

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *pāṭṭiyar* < *pāṭṭi* ‘bardess’ + *y* (glide) + *ar* PNG (*matu:749*). It is possible also to derive *pāṭṭi* ‘bardess’ from *pāṇ* ‘bard’ + *ṭi* PNG. Note that the word *pāṭṭi* has come to

<b>mōṭu + a tirai &gt; mōṭṭa tirai</b>	<i>(kali.131:38)</i>
<b>mōṭu + iru varāal &gt; mōṭṭiru varāal</b>	<i>(aka.196:2)</i>
<b>yāṇṭu + oru kāl &gt; yāṭṭoru kāl</b>	<i>(kali.71:26)</i>
<b>īntu + ilai &gt; īttilai</b>	<i>(peru.88)</i>
<b>vēntu + avai &gt; vēttavai</b>	<i>(malai.39)</i>
<b>vīru + irum koṛram &gt; vīrrirum koṛram</b>	<i>(pati.59:9)</i>
<b>vēru + aracu &gt; vēṛraacu</b>	<i>(pura.17:31)</i>
<b>vēru + ōr &gt; vēṛrōr</b>	<i>(pura.367:3)</i>
<b>nōnpu + i + y (glide) + ar &gt; nōnpiyar</b>	<i>(narr.22:6)</i>
<b>venru + i + y (glide) + āṭiya &gt; venriyāṭiya</b>	<i>(pati.40:12)</i>

## 5.10.

The stem has more than two syllables. The following item is a suffix. The stem-final vowel is deleted and the initial vowel of the suffix following the stem is occasionally lengthened, if it is not already long.<sup>48</sup>

<b>innatu + ai &gt; innatai</b>	<i>(narr.71:1)</i>
<b>ennatu + um &gt; ennātūum</b>	<i>(pura.172:4)</i>
<b>enaiyatu + um &gt; enaiyatūum</b>	<i>(narr.331:10)</i>

## 5.11.

The stem has more than two syllables. The following item is a word, not a suffix. The resulting form is a nominal compound of the form verb-verbal noun.<sup>49</sup> The stem-final **u** is deleted. The initial

---

mean 'grandmother' in modern Tamil.

<sup>48</sup> Commentators on medieval Tamil grammars would refer to this process as **in-icai-aḷapeṭai** 'elongation for the sake of melody.' See "Lengthening of Sounds (**aḷapeṭai**) and Vowel Clusters."

<sup>49</sup> One could also say that these forms are of the structure: past stem + verbal noun. Alternatively stated, adverbial participles function as derived stems to which another verbal stem is added. The combination results in a nominal compound of the form verb-verbal

vowel of the item following the stem is lengthened if necessary to make it into a verbal noun.

**pakuttu + uṇ > pakuttūṇ** [Note that **uṇ** changed to **ūṇ**] (*pati.38:15*)

**irantu + uṇ > irantūṇ** [Note that **uṇ** changed to **ūṇ**] (*kuru.33:3*)

**eṭuttu + ēru > eṭuttēru** (*pati.41:23*)

### 5.12.

The stem has two or more syllables. The following item is a word or a suffix.

The stem-final vowel is deleted with the following condition applied to the disyllabic stem: the disyllabic stem should be a verb and the consonant preceding the final vowel should be **k**, **ṭ**, or **ṛ**.

When the stem-final is not deleted, the glide **v** is inserted between the stem and the following item.

**piṛaṅku + attam > piṛaṅkattam** (*kuru.66:2*)

**vēṇṭu + annai > vēṇṭannai** (*aiṅk.208:1*)

**eṭu + aṭīrō > eṭaṭīrō** (*puṛa.388:10*)

**viṛaku + āka > viṛakāka** (*puṛa.16:5*)

**viḷaiyāṭu + āyamoṭu > viḷaiyāṭāyamoṭu** (*narr.68:1*)

**pāṭātu + āyiṇum > pāṭātāyiṇum** (*puṛa.200:10*)

**nalku + i > nalki** (*poru.83*)

**māru + iraṭṭum > māṛiraṭṭum** (*aiṅk.450:1*)

**ētu + ila > ētila** (*narr.161:10*)

**viṛaku + īmattu > viṛakīmattu** (*puṛa.245:4*)

**nukarku + eṇa > nukarkenā** (*kuri.181*)

**paṭu + um > paṭum** (*narr.61:10*)

---

noun.

<b>cūtu + uru &gt; cūtu<u>r</u>u</b>	<i>(matu.512)</i>
<b>nīraivu + ura &gt; nīraiv<u>u</u>ra</b>	<i>(kali.146:43)</i>
<b>viraku + oy mākkal &gt; virakoy mākkal</b>	<i>(pura.70:17)</i>
<b>paṭu 'well' + v + il 'in' &gt; paṭuv<u>i</u>l</b>	<i>(aka.79:3)</i>
<b>eḷu 'Rise!' + v + in<u>i</u> 'now' &gt; eḷuv<u>i</u>ni</b>	<i>(pura.207:1)</i>

## 5.13.

The stem has four syllables. The following item is a noun forming a compound with the stem. The stem-final vowel is deleted and the consonant preceding the stem-final vowel is doubled.

<b>viḷaiyātu + āyam &gt; viḷaiyāṭṭāyam</b>	<i>(aka.230:6)</i>
--	--------------------

## 6. When a stem-final short vowel u is followed by a consonant-initial item:

## 6.1.

The stem is monosyllabic. The following item is a noun. The initial consonant of the following item is doubled.

<b>u + k + karai &gt; ukkarai</b>	<i>(pura.357:9)</i>
<b>u + p + pāl &gt; uppāl</b>	<i>(pari.11:8)</i>
<b>u + v + varai &gt; uvvarai</b>	<i>(pati.78:2)</i>
<b>mu + k + kaṇ &gt; mukkaṇ</b>	<i>(pura.6:18)</i>

## 6.2.

The stem has two open syllables with short vowels. The following item is a suffix or a word.

When the consonant preceding the stem-final is **l** or **r**, the stem-final vowel preceding a suffix beginning with a single consonant is lengthened occasionally.

In the case of an adjectival stem in which the consonant preceding the stem-final vowel is **r**, the stem-final vowel is deleted and an

enunciative **i** is inserted between the stem and the following adjectival noun suffix. In other adjectival stems, a nasal homorganic with the initial consonant of the noun following the stem is inserted between the stem and the noun if the latter begins with **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p**.

<b>veru + tal &gt; verūtal</b>	( <i>kuri</i> :137)
<b>oru + pa &gt; orūpa</b>	( <i>pati</i> .33:12)
<b>e<u>l</u>u + ka &gt; e<u>l</u>ūuka 'make rise'</b>	( <i>kali</i> .102:34)
<b>ta<u>l</u>u + kam &gt; ta<u>l</u>ūukam</b>	( <i>narr</i> .50:3)
<b>e<u>l</u>u + ka &gt; e<u>l</u>uka 'Rise!'</b>	( <i>matu</i> :204)
<b>vi<u>ṭ</u>u + kam &gt; vi<u>ṭ</u>ukam</b>	( <i>ku<u>r</u>u</i> .106:6)
<b>mu<u>ḷ</u>u + tu &gt; mu<u>ḷ</u>utu</b>	( <i>pati</i> .14:19)
<b>ni<u>r</u>u + mi<u>n</u> &gt; ni<u>r</u>umi<u>n</u></b>	( <i>pu<u>r</u>a</i> .152:14)
<b>aru + i + tu &gt; aritu</b>	( <i>ai<u>n</u>k</i> .235:2)
<b>peru + i + tu &gt; peritu</b>	( <i>narr</i> .150:11)
<b>peru + tta &gt; perutta [no change]</b>	( <i>pu<u>r</u>a</i> .177:14)
<b>e<u>ṭ</u>u + ppa &gt; e<u>ṭ</u>uppa [no change]</b>	( <i>matu</i> :714)
<b>ka<u>ṭ</u>u + ñ + celal &gt; ka<u>ṭ</u>uñcelal</b>	( <i>aka</i> .150:6)
<b>ka<u>ṭ</u>u + m + pu<u>ṇ</u>al &gt; ka<u>ṭ</u>umpu<u>ṇ</u>al</b>	( <i>ne<u>ṭ</u>u</i> :18)
<b>ka<u>ṭ</u>u + nā<u>ḷ</u> &gt; ka<u>ṭ</u>unā<u>ḷ</u> [no change]</b>	( <i>ku<u>r</u>u</i> .380:7)

## 6.3.

The stem has two open syllables with short vowels. In most cases, the consonant preceding the stem-final vowel is **r** or **l**. The following item is a noun. The stem-final vowel is lengthened in most cases. In any case, the initial consonant of the following noun is doubled, if it is **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p**.

<b>kuru + k + ka<u>ṇ</u> &gt; ku<u>r</u>ūukka<u>ṇ</u></b>	( <i>malai</i> :169)
<b>ku<u>ḷ</u>u + k + ka<u>ḷ</u>i<u>r</u>ru &gt; ku<u>ḷ</u>ūukka<u>ḷ</u>i<u>r</u>ru</b>	( <i>pu<u>r</u>a</i> .97:9)
<b>va<u>ḷ</u>u + c + col &gt; va<u>ḷ</u>ūuccol</b>	( <i>kali</i> .106:4)
<b>paru + t + tiri &gt; pa<u>r</u>ūuttiri</b>	( <i>ne<u>ṭ</u>u</i> :103)

<b>kaṭippu iku + p + puṇ &gt; kaṭippikūuppun</b>	<i>(pati.40:3-4)</i>
<b>kuru + p + puli &gt; kurūuppuli</b>	<i>(malai:517)</i>
<b>paru + mayir &gt; parūumayir</b>	<i>(narr.98:1)</i>
<b>muḷu + vaḷḷuram &gt; muḷūuvaḷḷuram</b>	<i>(pura.219:2)</i>
<b>kuru + k + kaṇ &gt; kurukkaṇ</b>	<i>(kali.101:15)</i>
<b>viḷu + t + toṭi &gt; viḷuttoṭi</b>	<i>(pati.81:10)</i>

## 6.4.

The stem has two open syllables with short vowels. The following item is a verb form or a nominal. The stem-final is not lengthened but the initial consonant of the following item is doubled in most cases, if it is **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p**.

<b>kaṭu + k + kalittu eḷunta &gt; kaṭukkalittu eḷunta</b>	<i>(malai:14)</i>
<b>cetu + k + kaṇ &gt; cetukkaṇ</b>	<i>(pura.261:9)</i>
<b>tiru + k + kiḷar kōyil &gt; tirukkiḷar kōyil</b>	<i>(poru:90)</i>
<b>kuṟu + k + kai &gt; kuṟukkai</b>	<i>(aink.266:2)</i>
<b>ciṟu + k + kaṇ &gt; ciṟukkaṇ</b>	<i>(aink.266:1)</i>
<b>potu + k + koṇṭa &gt; potukkoṇṭa</b>	<i>(kali.66:11)</i>
<b>maṟu + t + taral &gt; maṟuttaral</b>	<i>(kali.15:15)</i>
<b>ciṟu + kaṇ &gt; ciṟukaṇ</b>	<i>(aink.267:1)</i>
<b>maṟu + taral &gt; maṟutaral</b>	<i>(aka.333:21)</i>
<b>iṭu + tōrum &gt; iṭutōrum</b>	<i>(pati.21:11)</i>
<b>putu + nāṟram &gt; putunāṟram</b>	<i>(pari.7:21)</i>
<b>kaṭu + munai &gt; kaṭumunai</b>	<i>(aka.372:10)</i>
<b>teṟu + vara &gt; teṟuvara</b>	<i>(narr.305:4)</i>

## 6.5.

The stem has two syllables with a long vowel or a closed syllable. The following item is a noun. The stem-final vowel is deleted. An enunciative **a** is inserted between the stem and the item following the stem after the stem-final is deleted. Subsequently, the word-initial

consonant of the noun following the stem is doubled if it is **k, c, t, or p**.

**vampu + a + p + patukkai > vampappatukkai** (*pura.3:21*)  
**ūku + a + nuṅkōl > ūka nuṅkōl** (*pura.324:5*)  
**vampu + a + māri > vampa māri** (*kuru.66:5*)

## 6.6.

The stem has two or more syllables. The disyllabic stem has a closed syllable, whether it has a long vowel or not. The following item is a verb or a noun. The initial consonant of the following item is doubled, if it is **k, c, t, or p**.

**puḷḷu + k + kural > puḷḷukkural** (*pura.385:1*)  
**viṇṭu + c + cērnta > viṇṭuccērnta** (*pati.55:15*)  
**villu + c + cori > villuccori** (*pari.18:40*)  
**uvavu + t + talai > uvavuttalai** (*pura.65:6*)  
**piṭavu + t + taḷai > piṭavuttaḷai** (*narr.246:8*)  
**kāmpu + t + tī > kāmputtī** (*kali.150:3*)  
**muḷavu + t + tōḷ > muḷavuttōḷ** (*pati.31:20*)  
**vallu + p + pōr > valluppōr** (*pari.18:41*)  
**vicumpu + mey āka > vicumpu mey āka** (*narr.ka.vā:3*)

## 6.7.

The stem has two or more open syllables. The disyllabic stem has a long vowel or a closed syllable. The following item is a verb or a noun. The consonant preceding the stem-final is doubled or hardened if it is **k, c, ṭ, t, p, or r**.<sup>50</sup> Subsequently, the initial consonant of the following item also is doubled if it is **k, c, t, or p**.

<sup>50</sup> Traditional grammarians would call this process a **valittal vikāram**.



<b>veruku + p + pal &gt; verukkuppal</b>	<i>(kuru.240:3)</i>
<b>āru + p + paṭuppa &gt; āruppaṭuppa</b>	<i>(cīru.39)</i>
<b>kayīru + p + puṛattu &gt; kayīruppuṛattu</b>	<i>(aka.128:11)</i>
<b>veruku + viṭai &gt; verukkuviṭai</b>	<i>(pura.324:1)</i>
<b>añcu + vara &gt; accuvara</b>	<i>(pura.360:14)</i>
<b>irumpu + mukam &gt; iruppu mukam</b>	<i>(pura.370:20)</i>

## 6.8.

The stem has two or more syllables. The following item is a nominal beginning with **y** or **p**. The stem-final vowel is deleted. The consonant preceding the stem-final is doubled or hardened if it is **k, c, ṭ, t, p,** or **r** and not already doubled or hardened. Subsequently, the initial consonant of the word following the stem is doubled if it is **p**. In the disyllabic adjectival stem, the vowel in the first syllable is occasionally lengthened instead of hardening the consonant preceding the deleted stem-final.

In all these cases, an enunciative **i** is inserted between the altered stem and the following item beginning with **y**; **ai** is inserted otherwise.<sup>51</sup>

<b>ninakku + i + yān &gt; ninakkiyān</b>	<i>(pura.200:15)</i>
<b>poruṭku + i + yān &gt; poruṭkiyān</b>	<i>(pura.208:6)</i>
<b>pakaṭu + i + yānai &gt; pakaṭṭiyānai</b>	<i>(narr.381:7)</i>

<sup>51</sup> The tradition does not have a name for such **ai** in these instances. But the **i** here is called a **kurriyal ikaram** 'extra-short i' and is considered as derived from the stem-final **u** which has its conventional name **kurriyal ukaram** 'extra-short u.' This traditional interpretation would not adequately explain cases like **putu + yānai > puttiyānai**, **cīru + yārru > cīriyārru**, and **veru + yārru** (given above), because the stem-final vowel **u** in **putu**, **cīru**, and **veru** is not a **kurriyal ukaram**. If one were to go by the tradition, one has to say that the stem first changes to **\*puttu**, **\*cīrru**, and **\*verru** making the stem-final become a **kurriyal ukaram** that ultimately changes to **i**, the **kurriyal ikaram**.

<b>parukkōṭu + i + yāl &gt; parukkōṭṭiyāl</b>	<i>(pari.10:56)</i>
<b>putu + i + yānai &gt; puttiyānai</b>	<i>(kali.97:7)</i>
<b>ceṛittu + i + yān kaṭavalin &gt; ceṛittiyān kaṭavalin</b>	<i>(kuṛi:12)</i>
<b>kaḷiru + i + yānai &gt; kaḷirriyānai</b>	<i>(pati.71:21)</i>
<b>cīru + i + yārru &gt; cīrriyārru</b>	<i>(pura.260:22)</i>
<b>veru + i + yārru &gt; verriyārru</b>	<i>(pura.261:4)</i>
<b>cīru + i + yāl &gt; cīriyāl</b>	<i>(poru:109)</i>
<b>pārāṭṭu + ai + p + pāl &gt; pārāṭṭaippāl</b>	<i>(kali.85:33)</i>
<b>māṭu + ai + p + pāl &gt; māṭṭaippāl</b>	<i>(kali.85:36)</i>

## 6.9.

The stem has more than two syllables. The following item is a word, not a suffix. If the combination of the stem-final vowel and the preceding consonant is identical to the combination of the initial consonant and the following vowel in the word following the stem, one of these combinations is deleted as a process of haplology.

<b>kaṭippu + puṭai &gt; kaṭippuṭai</b>	<i>(pati.84:1)</i>
<b>kaṛaṅku + kural &gt; kaṛaṅkural</b>	<i>(aiṅk.452:2)</i>
<b>taḷaṅku + kural &gt; taḷaṅkural</b>	<i>(aiṅk.448:1)</i>

## 7. When a stem-final consonant is followed by a vowel-initial item:

### 7.1.

The stem is monosyllabic with a short vowel. The stem-final consonant is neither **r** nor **l**. The following item is a suffix.

The stem-final consonant is doubled optionally. If it is doubled, the following changes occur subsequently: the suffix is added directly to the stem or an enunciative **i** is inserted between the altered adjectival stem and the suffix.

If the stem-final consonant is not doubled, then there are the following possibilities: the initial vowel of the suffix is lengthened for meter

unless it has more than two syllables or that the stem-final consonant is *v*; a glide, *v*, is inserted between the stem and the following suffix; an enunciative *i* is inserted between the stem and the following item.

<b>tam + m + ōṇ &gt; tammōṇ</b>	( <i>narr.</i> 88:6)
<b>pey + y + iṇ + um &gt; peyyiṇum</b>	( <i>pura.</i> 105:4)
<b>col + l + i &gt; colli</b>	( <i>narr.</i> 191:6)
<b>nal + l + īr ē &gt; nallīrē</b>	( <i>aka.</i> 388:10)
<b>val + l + ai &gt; vallai</b>	( <i>pura.</i> 27:17)
<b>tev + v + ir &gt; tevvir</b>	( <i>pura.</i> 170:9)
<b>mel + l + i + y (glide) + atu &gt; melliyaṭu</b>	( <i>kali.</i> 117:15)
<b>uṇ + i &gt; uṇī</b>	( <i>aiṅk.</i> 268:2)
<b>nil + iyar &gt; niliyar</b>	( <i>pura.</i> 166:34)
<b>koḷ + al &gt; koḷāal</b>	( <i>aka.</i> 47:10)
<b>koḷ + i &gt; koḷī</b>	( <i>poru.</i> 78)
<b>teṇ + atu &gt; teṇāatu</b>	( <i>aka.</i> 198:13)
<b>muṇ + atu &gt; muṇāatu</b>	( <i>kuru.</i> 34:4)
<b>koḷ + al &gt; koḷāl</b>	( <i>pati.</i> 16:19)
<b>tan + atu &gt; tanātu</b>	( <i>narr.</i> 164:1)
<b>muṇ + atu &gt; muṇātu</b>	( <i>kuru.</i> 11:4)
<b>nil + iyarō &gt; niliyarō [suffix has more than two syllables]</b>	( <i>pura.</i> 2:20)
<b>tev + i &gt; tevi</b>	( <i>pari.</i> 11:69)
<b>kaḷ + v + i &gt; kaḷvi<sup>52</sup></b>	( <i>kuru.</i> 312:1)
<b>tam + i + y (glide) + aḷ &gt; tamiyaḷ</b>	( <i>aka.</i> 5:2)
<b>val + i + y (glide) + ai &gt; valiyai</b>	( <i>pati.</i> 84:10)
<b>iṇ + i + y (glide) + ir &gt; iṇiyir</b>	( <i>malai.</i> 286)

<sup>52</sup> Another possible derivation: **kaḷ + vi**.

**tan** + i + y (glide) + ē > **taniyē** (*narr.162:4*)

**in** + i + y (glide) + ōn > **iniyōn** (*pura.115:6*)

## 7.2.

The stem is monosyllabic with a short vowel and does not end with the consonant **r**. The following item is a nominal. The stem-final consonant is doubled.<sup>53</sup>

**num** + **m** + **irai** > **nummirai** (*aka.388:26*)

**val** + **l** + **ukir** > **vallukir** (*pati.12:4*)

**tan** + **n** + **iyal** > **tanniyal** (*pura.25:2*)

**pon** + **n** + **anna** > **ponnanna** (*pura.137:10*)

## 7.3.

The stem is a monosyllabic verb with a short vowel and ends with the consonant **r**: **tar** 'to give' or **var** 'to come.' The following item is a suffix beginning with a vowel.

The initial vowel of the following suffix is lengthened, if it is **i**. This change is occasional when the initial vowel of the suffix is **u**.

The stem changes according to different suffixes. The vowel in the stem is certainly lengthened when the suffix following the stem begins with a short vowel and signifies negation. The vowel in the stem is occasionally lengthened when the suffix following the stem begins with a long vowel. When the suffix is the imperative **um**, the vowel in the stem is lengthened or the initial vowel of the suffix **u** is deleted subsequently allowing for the stem-final **r** to coalesce with the remaining part (**m**) of the suffix.

<sup>53</sup> The doubling of the stem-final consonant in instances like **ītallē** < **ītal** + **ē** (*pura.123:2*) and **ōmpallē** < **ōmpal** + **ē** (*kurū.294:8*), where the stem does have a long vowel, arises when there is a metrical requirement. See "Lengthening of Sounds (**a|apeṭai**) and Vowel Clusters" on metrical requirement.

<b>tar + i &gt; tarii</b>	( <i>ciru</i> :260)
<b>tar + iya &gt; tariiya</b>	( <i>aka</i> .3:4)
<b>tar + um &gt; tarum</b>	( <i>aka</i> .77:19)
<b>tar + um &gt; tarūum</b>	( <i>malai</i> :170)
<b>var + um &gt; varum</b>	( <i>narr</i> .53:7)
<b>var + um &gt; varūum</b>	( <i>narr</i> .37:11)
<b>tar + al &gt; taral</b>	( <i>kuru</i> .254:6)
<b>tar + al (negative) &gt; tāral</b>	( <i>kuru</i> .258:1)
<b>var + al &gt; varal</b>	( <i>ciru</i> :3)
<b>var + al (negative) &gt; vāral</b>	( <i>aka</i> .92:5)
<b>tar + āy &gt; tārāy (positive)</b>	( <i>aka</i> .165:8)
<b>tar + ā (negative) + ar &gt; tarāar</b>	( <i>pati</i> .71:21)
[or tar + ār > tarāar]	
<b>var + um &gt; vārum</b>	( <i>pari</i> .14:9)
<b>tar + um &gt; tam</b>	( <i>pati</i> .85:4)
<b>var + um &gt; vam</b>	( <i>poru</i> :101)

## 7.4.

The stem has one or more syllables. The following item is a suffix or a word. The monosyllabic stem has a long vowel. If the stem-final consonant is not **m**, it is joined to the initial vowel of the item following the stem without any change.

The stem-final consonant **m** becomes **tt** if the stem has more than one syllable and the item following the stem is a suffix.<sup>54</sup> However, this change is optional when the first syllable of the stem is closed.

<b>uriñ + a &gt; uriña</b>	( <i>aka</i> .167:12)
<b>nāṇ + in + aḷ &gt; nāṇinaḷ</b>	( <i>narr</i> .308:3)

<sup>54</sup> Traditional grammarians would say that there is an augment, **attu**, between the stem and the following item in such situations. Cf. *Tolkāppiyam*, *eḷuttatikāram*, *ḷampūraṇam*, Rule 186.

<b>verin + in &gt; verinin</b>	<i>(narr.25:1)</i>
<b>vāy + aḷ &gt; vāyaḷ</b>	<i>(tiru.56)</i>
<b>ūr + ēm &gt; ūrēm</b>	<i>(narr.220:7)</i>
<b>vēl + iṭṭu &gt; vēliṭṭu</b>	<i>(pati.46:11)</i>
<b>uruḷ + ilāy &gt; uruḷilāy</b>	<i>(kali.59:14)</i>
<b>maram + a &gt; maratta</b>	<i>(paṭṭ.59)</i>
<b>vēḷam + ai &gt; vēḷattai</b>	<i>(kali.97:20)</i>
<b>neñcam + oṭu &gt; neñcamoṭu</b>	<i>(kuru.290:4)</i>
<b>neñcam + ōṇ &gt; neñcattōṇ</b>	<i>(pura.377:6)</i>
<b>iruntaṇam + āka &gt; iruntaṇamāka</b>	<i>(aka.388:9)</i>
<b>kāṇēm + āyin &gt; kāṇēmāyin</b>	<i>(kuru.290:3)</i>

8. When a stem-final consonant is followed by a consonant-initial item:

### 8.1.

The stem ends with the consonant **n** or **v**. The following item is a verb form or a noun.

If the stem-final consonant is **n** and the following item is a noun, the vowel **a** is inserted between the stem and the noun. The vowel **u** is inserted if the item following the stem-final **n** is not a noun. Subsequently, the initial consonant of the following item is doubled in both cases.

If the stem-final consonant is **v**, it becomes identical to the initial consonant of the following item.

<b>verin + a + t + tōl &gt; verinattōl</b>	<i>(pari.21:5)</i>
<b>verin + u + c + cenranna &gt; verinuccenranna</b>	<i>(aka.65:14)</i>
<b>tev + munai &gt; temmunai</b>	<i>(pati.80:17)</i>

### 8.2.

The stem ends with the consonant **m** and is a nominal, but not an adjective. The following item is a suffix or a nominal.

When the stem refers to a tree and the following item is a word forming a nominal compound with the stem, the stem-final consonant is deleted and subsequently the initial consonant of the item following the stem is doubled if it is **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p**. If there is no resulting compound, the stem-final would change into a nasal homorganic with the initial consonant of the following word.

If the stem is the oblique form of a pronoun and the following item is a case suffix, an enunciative **a** is inserted between the stem and the suffix. The final consonant of the pronominal stem changes into a nasal homorganic with the initial consonant of the following word if the latter is not a duplicate of the stem and begins with **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p**. If the word following the oblique pronoun stem is a duplicate of the stem, the stem-final consonant is deleted and the initial consonant of the following word is doubled.

In other stems, the following changes are possible. The stem-final **m** could become **tt** in non-monosyllabic stems if the first syllable is not closed and if the item following the stem refers to a part of what the stem refers to as a whole. Subsequently, an enunciative **u** is inserted between the stem and the following item, and the initial consonant **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p** of the latter is doubled. In other cases, the stem-final **m** is deleted and the initial consonant of the item following the stem is doubled if it is **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p**.

When the item following the stem begins with **y**, an enunciative **i** is inserted between the stem and the following item.

**maram** 'tree' + **k** + **kompu** 'branch' > **marakkompu** (*aka.345:13*)  
**maram** 'tree' + **talai** > **marantalai** (*puṛa.371:2*)  
**yām** + **tanakku** *uṛumuṛai* > **yāntanakku** *uṛumuṛai* (*puṛa.292:2*)  
**um** + **a** + **kku** > **umakku** (*pari.20:84*)  
**tam** + **kuṭi** > **taṇkuṭi** (*pati.81:13*)

<b>em + kōmān</b> > <b>eṅkōmān</b>	( <i>puṛa.95:9</i> )
<b>em + pati</b> > <b>empati</b>	( <i>aka.200:6</i> )
<b>em + varai aḷavai</b> > <b>emvarai aḷavai</b>	( <i>aka.200:13</i> )
<b>tam + mun</b> > <b>tammun</b>	( <i>pari.15:19</i> )
<b>tam + nāṭṭu</b> > <b>tam nāṭṭu</b>	( <i>narr.183:1</i> )
<b>num + nukam</b> > <b>nunnukam</b>	( <i>pati.63:15</i> )
<b>tam + tam</b> > <b>tattam</b>	( <i>pari.22:44</i> )
<b>aṇam + kai</b> > <b>aṇattukkai</b>	( <i>pari.20:105</i> )
<b>araiyam + kēṭu</b> > <b>araiyattukkēṭu</b>	( <i>puṛa.202:8</i> )
<b>kāṇam + kākkai</b> > <b>kāṇakkākkai</b>	( <i>puṛa.342:1</i> )
<b>kuḷam + kīl</b> > <b>kuḷakkīl</b>	( <i>puṛa.33:5</i> )
<b>kunram + kīl</b> > <b>kunrakkīl</b> <sup>55</sup>	( <i>pari.19:36</i> )
<b>kaṇam + ku</b> > <b>kaṇakku</b>	( <i>pari.19:39</i> )
<b>paḷam ‘fruit’ + cuḷai</b> > <b>paḷaccuḷai</b>	( <i>aka.288:13</i> )
<b>koṛram + tiru</b> > <b>koṛrattiru</b>	( <i>pati.90:24</i> )
<b>cinam + pōr</b> > <b>cinappōr</b>	( <i>pati.77:1</i> )
<b>nilam + makaḷ</b> > <b>nilamakaḷ</b>	( <i>puṛa.365:10</i> )
<b>curam + mutal</b> > <b>curamutal</b>	( <i>puṛa.60:4</i> )
<b>nilam + varai</b> > <b>nilavarai</b>	( <i>narr.399:5</i> )
<b>koṛram + vēntar</b> > <b>koṛravēntar</b>	( <i>puṛa.338:8</i> )
<b>aṇaiyam + i + yām</b> > <b>aṇaiyamiyām</b>	( <i>aink.70:5</i> )

## 8.3.

The stem ends with the consonant **m**, and is not an adjective. The following item is a word, not a suffix. Either the stem or the following word is a verb form.

If the stem is not a pronoun, the stem-final **m** becomes a nasal homorganic with the initial consonant of the following item.

<sup>55</sup> According to traditional grammarians, there is a deletion of the so called **cāriyai** “augment” **akku** in such instances: **kunram + akku + kīl** > **kunrakkīl**. Cf. Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, Iḷampūraṇam, Rule 129.



If the stem is a pronoun, the stem-final **m** is deleted and the initial consonant of the following verb is doubled if it is **k, c, t, or p**.

In either case, the stem-final **m** is deleted when the stem is non-monosyllabic or has a long vowel and the following item begins with a nasal.

<b>kayam + kalañki</b>	<b>&gt; kayañkalañki</b>	( <i>pura.283:1</i> )
<b>vem + kātali</b>	<b>&gt; veñkātali</b>	( <i>pura.210:5</i> )
<b>valam + tiri maruppu</b>	<b>&gt; valantiri maruppu</b>	( <i>aka.304:9</i> )
<b>nam + tuṛantu</b>	<b>&gt; nattuṛantu</b>	( <i>aka.183:3</i> )
<b>nam + puṇarntu</b>	<b>&gt; nappuṇarntu</b>	( <i>aka.311:5</i> )
<b>attam + naṇṇiya</b>	<b>&gt; atta naṇṇiya</b>	( <i>pura.313:1</i> )
<b>makaram + mēva</b>	<b>&gt; makara mēva</b>	( <i>pari.11:9</i> )
<b>kalam + mikuppa</b>	<b>&gt; kalamikuppa</b>	( <i>pura.161:30</i> )
<b>yām + makilṭūnka</b>	<b>&gt; yāmakilṭūnka</b>	( <i>pura.316:10</i> )
<b>yām + vēṇṭiyānku</b>	<b>&gt; yām vēṇṭiyānku</b>	( <i>pura.171:5</i> )

#### 8.4.

The stem ends with the consonant **m**, and is an adjective.<sup>56</sup> The following item is a word. The stem-final **m** changes to **v** if the following word begins with **v**. If the word following the stem begins with **k, c, or t**, the stem-final **m** changes to a nasal homorganic with the initial consonant of that word. Otherwise, there is no change.

<b>am + vari</b>	<b>&gt; avvari</b>	( <i>narr.370:5</i> )
<b>am + kavaṭu</b>	<b>&gt; aṅkavaṭu</b>	( <i>pati.23:1</i> )

<sup>56</sup> Some might consider adjectival stems such as **tī** 'sweet', **pū** 'soft', **tē** 'sweet', and **ai** 'subtle, soft' as ending with an **m** and so to follow the process described here.

## 8.5.

The stem ends with the consonant **ṇ**, **l**, **ḷ**, or **ṅ** and is not an adjective. The following item is a suffix or a word. Changes may occur in the stem-final consonant and/or the initial consonant of the item following the stem.

The stem-final consonant changes into its corresponding hard sound when the initial consonant of the item following the stem begins with **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p**. Thus, **ṇ** > **ṭ**; **l** > **ṛ**; **ḷ** > **ṭ**; and **ṅ** > **ṛ**. In these cases, there is no change in the initial consonant of the item following the stem.

When the initial consonant of the item following the stem is **t** or **n** the situation can be complex. Basically, **t** and **n** assimilate to the tongue position of the stem-final consonant and change their point of articulation according to the point of articulation of the stem-final, so **t** > **ṭ** and **n** > **ṇ** when the stem-final is **ḷ** or **ṇ**; **t** > **ṛ** and **n** > **ṅ** when the stem-final is **l** or **ṅ**. The following happen concurrently:

The stem-final nasal (**ṇ** or **ṅ**) may remain unchanged.

The non-nasal stem-final consonant changes into its corresponding nasal, whereas the stem-final nasal consonant changes into its corresponding hard consonant. Thus, stem-final **l** > **ṅ**; **ḷ** > **ṇ**; **ṇ** > **ṭ**; and **ṅ** > **ṛ**.

The non-nasal stem-final consonant changes into a hard consonant: **l** > **ṛ**; **ḷ** > **ṭ**.

Rarely, the non-nasal stem-final consonant (**l** or **ḷ**) becomes the **āytam** (**ḥ**) after changing the initial consonant **t** of the following item respectively to **ṛ** and **ṭ**. The stem in this situation is monosyllabic with a short vowel.

Sometimes, the stem-final consonant is deleted after changing the following item into a non-āytam. When this change occurs in a monosyllabic stem with a short vowel, the vowel is lengthened.

If none of the above changes occurs, an enunciative vowel is inserted optionally between the stem and the following item. The enunciative vowel is **a** if the stem is a pronoun, and **u** if the item following the stem does not begin with **y**. If the item following the stem begins with **y**, the enunciative vowel inserted is **i**. The stem-final consonant in the monosyllabic stem with a short vowel is doubled. The initial hard consonant (**k**, **c**, **t**, or **p**) of the following suffix is doubled if it is a case marker or a word following a monosyllabic stem.

<b>kaṇ + ku &gt; kaṭku</b> [ṇ changed to ṭ]	( <i>kuru</i> .202:3)
<b>naṭuvaṇ + cilaippa &gt; naṭuvaṭcilaippa</b> [ṇ changed to ṭ]	( <i>pati</i> .54:13)
<b>cēṇ + pulam &gt; cēṭpulam</b> [ṇ changed to ṭ]	( <i>aka</i> .390:2)
<b>muraṇ + pū &gt; muraṭpū</b> [ṇ changed to ṭ]	( <i>peru</i> .294)
<b>māṇ + t + aṇ + a &gt; māṇṭana</b> [t changed to ṭ]	( <i>pati</i> .19:27)
<b>kāṇ + t + ī &gt; kaṇṭī</b> [t changed to ṭ; stem vowel changed]	( <i>pari</i> .6:64)
<b>kāṇ + t + ir &gt; kāṇṭir</b> [t changed to ṭ]	( <i>aka</i> .76:9)
<b>viṇ + tōy piṇṅkal &gt; viṇṭōy piṇṅkal</b> [t changed to ṭ]	( <i>pura</i> .391:2)
<b>kaṇ + nīr &gt; kaṇṇīr</b> [n changed to ṇ]	( <i>narr</i> .88:8)
<b>kaṇ + tu &gt; kaṭṭu</b> [ṇ changed to ṭ; t changed to ṭ]	( <i>pura</i> .203:10)
<b>tūṇ + taṭi &gt; tūṭṭaṭi</b> [ṇ changed to ṭ; t changed to ṭ]	( <i>pari</i> .4:20)
<b>pun + tāl &gt; puṭṭāl</b> [ṇ changed to ṭ; t changed to ṭ]	( <i>aka</i> .120:10)
<b>māṇ + nalam &gt; māṇalam</b> [n changed to ṇ; stem-final is deleted]	( <i>aink</i> .139:2)
<b>avaṇ + ninrum &gt; avaṇinrum</b> [n changed to ṇ; stem-final is deleted]	( <i>malai</i> .53)
<b>kaṇ + u + kku &gt; kaṇṇukku</b> [enunciative u]	( <i>pura</i> .167:7)

<b>eṇ + u + ti &gt; eṇṇuti</b> [enunciative u]	( <i>kurū.63:2</i> )
<b>pēṇ + u + pa &gt; pēṇupa</b> [enunciative u]	( <i>narr.72:1</i> )
<b>eṇ + u + pa &gt; eṇṇupa</b> [enunciative u]	( <i>purā.116:8</i> )
<b>nāṇ + u + k + kuṛaivilaḷ &gt; nāṇukkuṛaivilaḷ</b> [enunciative u]	( <i>pari.12:49</i> )
<b>pūṇ + ka &gt; pūṇka</b> [no change]	( <i>narr.81:5</i> )
<b>kāṇ + mati &gt; kāṇmati</b> [no change]	( <i>aiṅk.134:1</i> )
<b>uṇ + min &gt; uṇmin</b> [no change]	( <i>pati.18:1</i> )
<b>kal + pu &gt; karpu</b> [l changed to r]	( <i>pati.70:15</i> )
<b>kaṭal + karai &gt; kaṭarṅkarai</b> [l changed to r]	( <i>aiṅk.168:1</i> )
<b>kaṭal + paṭappai &gt; kaṭarpaṭappai</b> [l changed to r]	( <i>pati.55:6</i> )
<b>cel + t + aṇ + a &gt; cenṛana</b> [l changed to n; t changed to r]	( <i>aka.251:1</i> )
<b>cel + t + ī &gt; cenṛī</b> [l changed to n; t changed to r]	( <i>narr.360:5</i> )
<b>nil + t + ī + mō &gt; niṇṛimō</b> [l changed to n; t changed to r]	( <i>narr.45:8</i> )
<b>vel + ti &gt; venṛi</b> [l changed to n; t changed to r]	( <i>kurū.111:2</i> )
<b>nal + nāṭṭu &gt; nannāṭṭu</b> [l changed to n; n changed to n]	( <i>pati.55:6</i> )
<b>cel + mati &gt; cenṛmati</b> [l changed to n]	( <i>aka.288:1</i> )
<b>kal + mār &gt; kaṇmār</b> [l changed to n]	( <i>purā.169:9</i> )
<b>vēl + miḷai &gt; vēṇmiḷai</b> [l changed to n]	( <i>pati.33:7</i> )
<b>vel + vēl &gt; venṛvēl</b> [l changed to n]	( <i>purā.201:18</i> )
<b>vel + ti &gt; verṛi</b> [l changed to r; t changed to r]	( <i>tirū.258</i> )
<b>kal + t + u &gt; karṛu</b> [l changed to r; t changed to r]	( <i>matu.767</i> )
[Some might prefer <b>kal + tt + u</b> ]	
<b>nil + tara &gt; niṇṛara</b> [l changed to r; t changed to r]	( <i>matu.522</i> )
<b>kaṭal + tirai &gt; kaṭarṛirai</b> [l changed to r; t changed to r]	( <i>aiṅk.105:1-2</i> )
<b>pal + ti &gt; paḥṛi</b> [l changed to ḥ; t changed to r]	( <i>paṭṭ.30</i> )
<b>kol + takai &gt; koḥṛakai</b> [l changed to ḥ; t changed to r]	( <i>pari.5:6</i> )
<b>pal + tōl &gt; paḥṛōl</b> [l changed to ḥ; t changed to r]	( <i>pati.83:3</i> )

<b>uḷal + tal &gt; uḷaral</b>	(aka.208:12)
[t changed to r; stem-final is deleted]	
<b>kuyil + nar &gt; kuyinar</b>	(matu.511)
[n changed to n̄; stem-final is deleted]	
<b>varampil + tānai &gt; varampirānai</b>	(pati.29:15)
[t changed to r; stem-final is deleted]	
<b>iyal + tēr &gt; iyarēr</b>	(aink.104:3)
[t changed to r; stem-final is deleted]	
<b>vāl + narai &gt; vānarai</b>	(pura.277:2)
[n changed to n̄; stem-final is deleted]	
<b>kurucil + nī &gt; kurucinī</b>	(pati.32:1)
[n changed to n̄; stem-final is deleted]	
<b>vel + tal &gt; vēral</b>	(pura.45:6)
[t changed to r; stem-final is deleted; stem vowel is lengthened]	
<b>cel + ti &gt; cēri</b>	(narr.19:7)
[t changed to r; stem-final is deleted; stem vowel is lengthened]	
<b>col + u + mati &gt; collumati</b> [enunciative u]	(aink.479:1)
<b>eḷil + i + yānai &gt; eḷiliyānai</b> [enunciative i]	(pari.20:4)
<b>cel + ka &gt; celka</b> [no change]	(poru.177)
<b>cel + pa &gt; celpa</b> [no change]	(narr.73:6)
<b>ivaḷ + ku &gt; ivaṭku</b> [ḷ changed to ṭ]	(aink.103:3)
<b>taḷ + pa &gt; taṭpa</b> [ḷ changed to ṭ]	(narr.94:3)
<b>peḷ + pu &gt; peṭpu</b> [ḷ changed to ṭ]	(pura.205:2)
<b>vēḷ + kōccirāar &gt; vēṭkōccirāar</b> [ḷ changed to ṭ]	(pura.32:8)
<b>puḷ + pakai &gt; puṭpakai</b> [ḷ changed to ṭ]	(pura.68:11)
<b>koḷ + t + u &gt; koṇṭu</b> [ḷ changed to ṇ; t changed to ṭ]	(pura.201:7)
<b>koḷ + t + ī &gt; koṇṭī</b> [ḷ changed to ṇ; t changed to ṭ]	(kali.65:14)
<b>nāḷ + makiḷ irukkai &gt; nāṇmakiḷ irukkai</b>	(pati.85:8)
[ḷ changed to ṇ]	
<b>koḷ + mati &gt; koṇmati</b> [ḷ changed to ṇ]	(pura.200:15)
<b>kēḷ + t + i &gt; kēṭṭi</b> [ḷ changed to ṭ; t changed to ṭ]	(aka.68:4)

**muḷ + tāḷ + tāmarai > muṭṭāṭṭāmarai** (*kuri.80*)

[ḷ changed to ṭ; t changed to ṭ]

**kaḷ + tu > kaḥṭu** [ḷ changed to ḥ; t changed to ṭ] (*pura.319:4*)

**āḷ + tal > āṭal** [t changed to ṭ; stem-final is deleted] (*pati.75:14*)

**nāḷ + torum > nātorum** (*pati.54:7*)

[t changed to ṭ; stem-final is deleted]

**taṭantāḷ + nārai > taṭantāṇārai** (*pati.29:4*)

[n changed to ṇ; stem-final is deleted]

**puḷ + u + k + kural > puḷḷukkural** [enunciative u ] (*pura.41:7*)

**eṇ + ku > eṛku** [ṇ changed to ṛ] (*pura.303:9*)

**kāṇiṇ + kātalantōḷi > kāṇiṛkātalantōḷi** (*aka.352:11*)

[ṇ changed to ṛ]

**niṇ vayiṇ + pirinta > niṇvayirpirinta** [ṇ changed to ṛ] (*pati.79:4*)

**taṇ + puṛam > tarpuṛam** [n changed to ṛ] (*pura.383:13*)

**eṇ + ti > eṇri** [t changed to ṛ] (*aka.370:7*)

**tiṇ + ti > tiṇri** [t changed to ṛ] (*kali.65:13*)

**āṇ + t + u > āṇru** [t changed to ṛ] (*kuṛu.155:3*)

**tiṇ + t + u > tiṇru** [t changed to ṛ] (*poru.118*)

**muṇ + tiṇai > muṇriṇai** [t changed to ṛ] (*pati.85:5*)

**cevvūṇ + tōṇrā > cevvūṇrōṇrā** [t changed to ṛ] (*pati.55:7*)

**poṇ + nēr > poṇnēr** [n changed to ṇ] (*aka.229:13*)

**eṇ + tuyar > eṇruyar** [ṇ changed to ṛ; t changed to ṛ] (*pari.8:78*)

**pulampan + tēri > pulamparrēri** (*aink.166:3*)

[ṇ changed to ṛ; t changed to ṛ]

**nilaṇ + neḷiya > nilaneḷiya** (*pura.345:6*)

[n changed to ṇ; stem-final is deleted]

**eṇ + a + (k)ku > eṇakku** [enunciative a] (*narr.128:3*)

**niṇ + a + (k)ku > niṇakku** [enunciative a] (*pati.73:2*)

**taṇ + a + (k)ku > taṇakku** [enunciative a] (*aka.32:18*)

**maṇ + u + ka > manṇuka** [enunciative u] (*pura.91:7*)

**tun + u + kam > tunṇukam** [enunciative u] (*aka.154:15*)

**miṇ + u + p + pōl > minṇuppōl** [enunciative u] (*pari.21:54*)



<b>tiṇ + cuvar &gt; tiṇcuvar</b> [no change]	( <i>matu</i> :667)
<b>taṇ + porunai &gt; taṇporunai</b> [no change]	( <i>pura</i> .11:5)
<b>taṇ + i + tu &gt; taṇṇitu</b> [enunciative i]	( <i>aka</i> .218:15)
<b>cil + cila &gt; ciṛcila</b> [l changed to ṛ]	( <i>pura</i> .331:9)
<b>cil + mīn &gt; ciṇmīn</b> [l changed to ṇ]	( <i>pura</i> .348:3-4)
<b>nal + tu &gt; naṇru</b> [l changed to ṇ; t changed to ṛ]	( <i>kuṛu</i> .38:4)
<b>mel + nōkku &gt; meṇṇōkku</b>	( <i>kali</i> .86:23)
[l changed to ṇ; n changed to ṇ]	
<b>akal + i + tu &gt; akalitu</b> [enunciative i]	( <i>pura</i> .256:6)
<b>nal + l + i + tu &gt; nallitu</b> [enunciative i]	( <i>malai</i> :80)
<b>mel + l + i + tu &gt; mellitu</b> [enunciative i]	( <i>matu</i> :419)
<b>nal + l + i + yāl &gt; nalliyāl</b> [enunciative i]	( <i>malai</i> :450)
<b>tol + kavīn &gt; tol + kavīn</b> [no change]	( <i>narr</i> .14:1)
<b>nal + yāl &gt; nalyāl</b> [no change]	( <i>malai</i> :381)
<b>veḷ + kuṭai &gt; veṇkuṭai</b> [l changed to ṇ]	( <i>ciru</i> :64)
<b>vaḷ + kai &gt; vaṇkai</b> [[l changed to ṇ]	( <i>matu</i> :442)
<b>veḷ + nari &gt; veṇṇari</b>	( <i>pati</i> .22:34)
[l changed to ṇ; n changed to ṇ]	
<b>vāl + nutal &gt; vāṇutal</b>	( <i>pati</i> .19:14)
[n changed to ṇ; stem-final deleted]	
<b>veḷ + i + tu &gt; veḷitu</b> [enunciative i]	( <i>pura</i> .279:8)
<b>veḷ + ai + t + tōṭu &gt; veḷḷaittōṭu</b> [enunciative ai]	( <i>kuṛu</i> .163:2)
<b>veḷ + yāṭṭu &gt; veḷ yāṭṭu</b> [no change]	( <i>pari</i> .5:62)
<b>iṇ + tuṇai &gt; iṇruṇai</b> [t changed to ṛ]	( <i>aka</i> .352:7)
<b>iṇ + nakai &gt; iṇṇakai</b> [n changed to ṇ]	( <i>narr</i> .81:9)
<b>iṇ + cīr &gt; iṇcīr</b> [no change]	( <i>narr</i> .138:10)

## 8.7.

The stem is monosyllabic and ends with the consonant **r**, but is not an adjective: **tar** 'to give' and **var** 'to come.' The following item is a suffix beginning with a consonant. An enunciative **u** is inserted between the stem and the following suffix when the suffix begins with **k**, **t**, or **p**. But, the stem-final **r** is changed into a nasal homorganic



with the initial consonant of the following suffix when the latter is the past/completive marker **t** or when it begins with a nasal.

<b>tar + u + kam &gt; tarukam</b>	( <i>aka.21:8</i> )
<b>tar + u + ti &gt; taruti</b>	( <i>aka.188:14</i> )
<b>var + u + nar &gt; varunar</b>	( <i>kuṛi.202</i> )
<b>tar + u + pa &gt; tarupa</b>	( <i>pati.59:12</i> )
<b>var + t + u &gt; vantu</b>	( <i>narr.229:11</i> )
<b>tar + t + u &gt; tantu</b>	( <i>matu.766</i> )
<b>tar + min &gt; tammin</b>	( <i>matu.729</i> )
<b>tar + min &gt; tamin</b>	( <i>pura.152:18</i> )
<b>var + min &gt; vamin</b>	( <i>pati.49:1</i> )
<b>var + mō &gt; vammō</b>	( <i>pura.180:9</i> )

## 8.8.

The stem is monosyllabic, ends with the consonant **r**, and is an adjective. The following item is a word. A nasal homorganic with the initial consonant **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p** of the word following the stem is inserted between the stem and the following word beginning with a nasal. If this change does not occur, an enunciative **a** is inserted between the stem and the following item. Consequently, the initial **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p** of the word following the stem is doubled.

<b>īr + ñ + kaḷai &gt; īrñkaḷai</b>	( <i>malai.207</i> )
<b>īr + ñ + cuval &gt; īrñcuval</b>	( <i>aka.133:16</i> )
<b>īr + n + taṭi &gt; īrntaṭi</b>	( <i>narr.120:5</i> )
<b>īr + m + purattu &gt; īrmpurattu</b>	( <i>narr.87:7</i> )
<b>īr + ñeṇṭu &gt; īrñeṇṭu</b>	( <i>kuṛu.117:2</i> )
<b>īr + a + c + ceru &gt; īracceru<sup>57</sup></b>	( <i>pura.369:10</i> )

<sup>57</sup> Some might derive this form from **īram + ceru**.

8.9.

The stem ends with the consonant **y**, **r**, or **l** and is not an adjective. The stem ending with **r** or **l** has a long vowel or at least two syllables. The following item is a suffix or a word.

The initial consonant of the item following the stem is doubled under the following circumstances: the item following the stem is a noun; the stem and the following item bear a case-relation. If the suffix following the stem begins with **m**, this doubling is occasional. An enunciative **i** is inserted between the stem ending with **r** and the following word when the latter begins with **y**. There is no change otherwise.<sup>58</sup>

<b>mey + k + kalavai</b>	( <i>pari.7:20</i> )
<b>tuy + t + talai manti</b>	( <i>puṛa.158:24</i> )
<b>erul + t + tōl</b>	( <i>matu.729</i> )
<b>vāy + p + pakai</b>	( <i>aka.101:6</i> )
<b>kīl + p + paṇintu</b>	( <i>pati.75:4</i> )
<b>koy + m + mayir</b>	( <i>naṛṛ.81:4</i> )
<b>kūṭunar + p + piriya<u>lan</u></b>	( <i>aka.352:8</i> )
<b>amarar + p + pēṇi</b>	( <i>puṛa.99:1</i> )
<b>cey + m + mār</b> (infinitive suffix)	( <i>pati.54:14</i> )
<b>cēr + mi<u>n</u></b> (imperative suffix)	( <i>puṛa.9:5</i> )
<b>vīl + mi<u>n</u></b>	( <i>puṛa.262:1</i> )
<b>imi<u>l</u> + maruti<u>n</u></b>	( <i>pati.13:7</i> )
<b>ivar + i + yār</b>	( <i>puṛa.201:1</i> )
<b>tantār + i + yār</b>	( <i>kali.84:32</i> )
<b>cey + t + u</b>	( <i>matu.371</i> )

<sup>58</sup> The form **cōṇāṭu** ‘the Cōla country’ (cf. *paṭṭ.28*) is derived thus: **cōl**a + **nāṭu**. First, the stem-final **a** is deleted. Then, the resulting stem-final **l** changes the following **n** to **ṇ** and is elided subsequently. See 8.5 above for similar processes.

<b>kāy + tal &gt; kāy<sub>tal</sub></b>	<i>(pura.258:11)</i>
<b>kāy + tt + u &gt; kāy<sub>ttu</sub></b>	<i>(pura.120:8)</i>
<b>cēy + ttu &gt; cēy<sub>ttu</sub></b>	<i>(cīru:202)</i>
<b>vāy + puku kaṭāam &gt; vāy puku kaṭāam</b>	<i>(aka.93:17)</i>
<b>cēr + kam &gt; cēr<sub>kam</sub></b>	<i>(pura.255:6)</i>
<b>puṇar + cci &gt; puṇar<sub>cci</sub></b>	<i>(kuri:212)</i>
<b>ār + na &gt; ā<sub>r</sub>na</b>	<i>(pati.13:6)</i>
<b>āl + ka &gt; ā<sub>l</sub>ka</b>	<i>(pura.132:2)</i>
<b>āl + cci &gt; ā<sub>l</sub>cci</b>	<i>(pura.60:8)</i>
<b>pīra<sub>l</sub> + na &gt; pīra<sub>l</sub>na</b>	<i>(pati.13:1)</i>

## THEORY OF CLASSICAL TAMIL POETRY

**GENERAL:** The basic term that refers to Tamil meter is **pā**, which refers to a poem by metonymy. These poems have a limit (**aḷavu**) on the number of their lines and each line is called an **aṭi** which is made up of a certain number of metrical feet known as the **cīr**. Each **cīr** is composed of a certain number of basic metrical units called **acai** which are made up of letters (vowels and consonants) known by the generic term **eḷuttu**. Each **eḷuttu** is perceived to have certain intrinsic length/duration, which is known by the term **māttirai**.

In addition to the above components which might here be referred to as the core structural components of a Tamil poem, there are certain other structural components and content-related components to look for, because they impart aesthetic beauty (**vanappu**) to the poem. They are “stringing” or alliteration (**toṭai**), “wrapping” or the connection between the beginning and the end of a poem (**māṭṭu**), rhythmic effect (**vaṇṇam**), serenity (**ammai**), beauty (**aḷaku**), antiquity (**tonmai**), elegance (**tōl**), novelty (**viruntu**), and the choice of letters, words, and line length (**iyaipu**, **pulan**, and **ilaipu**).

With regard to the substance of the poem, the features to look for are perspective (**nōkku**), themes concerning emotions, sentiments, and norms (**tiṇai** and **kaikōl**), *dramatis personae* and their statements (**kētpōr** and **kūrṟu**), context and time (**kaḷaṇ** and **kālam**), results of the theme of the composition (**payan** and **meypṇāṭu**), assumption of poetic conventions and inference (**munṇam** and **eccam**), and conforming to and deviation from the norm (**tuṟai** and **poruḷ vakai**).

Finally, the processes underlying the composition of a poem are known as composing a poem (**yāppu**) following the established conventions (**marapu**) and the process of evaluation (**tūkku**). All these features are discussed in the following pages, and some poems are scanned at the end.

### Traditional Approach to a Tamil Poem

Traditional erudite Tamil poets (**pulavar**) consider the above introduced features as “limbs” of a Tamil poem, and provide the technical rubric for these 34 features as **uruppu** ‘limb(s).’ The technical names for these components are **māttirai**, **eḷuttu**, **acai**, **cīr**, **aṭi**, **yāppu**, **marapu**, **tūkku**, **toṭai**, **nōkku**, **pā**, **aḷavu**, **tiṇai**, **kaikōl**, **kūrṟu**, **kētpōr**, **kaḷaṇ**, **kālam**, **payan**, **meypṇāṭu**, **eccam**, **munṇam**, **poruḷ**, **tuṟai**, **māṭṭu**, **vaṇṇam**, **ammai**, **aḷaku**, **tonmai**, **tōl**, **viruntu**, **iyaipu**, **pulaṇ**, and **īḷaipu**. Among them, the last eight (**ammai**, **aḷaku**, **tonmai**, **tōl**, **viruntu**, **iyaipu**, **pulaṇ**, and **īḷaipu**) are applicable to long narrative poetry, whereas the rest are attributable to a compilation (like anthology) as well as to an individual poem.

From another perspective, **eḷuttu**, **māttirai**, **acai**, **cīr**, **aṭi**, **yāppu**, **tūkku**, **toṭai**, **pā**, **aḷavu**, **māṭṭu**, **vaṇṇam**, **iyaipu**, and **īḷaipu** are the fourteen components pertaining to the prosodic structure of Tamil poetry. Those which relate to the subject matter are the following nineteen: **nōkku**, **tiṇai**, **kaikōl**, **kūrṟu**, **kētpōr**, **kaḷaṇ**, **kālam**, **payan**, **meypṇāṭu**, **eccam**, **munṇam**, **poruḷ**, **tuṟai**, **ammai**, **aḷaku**, **tonmai**, **tōl**, **viruntu**, and **pulaṇ**. The component called **marapu** “con-

vention” is common to the form as well as the subject matter of Tamil poetry.<sup>1</sup>

For the purposes of this study, the 34 components mentioned above are discussed below in two major sections: prosodic components and components of subject matter.<sup>2</sup>

## Prosodic Components

One could make a further division of the fourteen items which are specifically applicable to the prosodic structure of Tamil poetry and this would result in three categories of these prosodic components as core structural components (**eḷuttu**, **māttirai**, **acai**, **cīr**, **aṭi**, **pā**, and **aḷavu**), components referring to certain processes (**yāppu** and **tūkku**), and aesthetic components (**toṭai**, **māṭṭu**, **vaṇṇam**, **iyaipu**, and **īlaipu**).

## Core Structural Components

Since the letters (**eḷuttu**) are the most basic entities of a poem, traditional Tamil grammars on prosody always begin with a discussion of

---

<sup>1</sup> When the subject matter is put into a composition, established conventions are to be followed. The tradition refers to such established conventions by the term **marapu** “custom, convention, practice.” The conventions pertain to words and practices that are contemporaneous with the composition. Motivated readers are encouraged to read the commentators’ excellent discussion on **marapu** in *Tolkāppiyam*, *poruḷatikāram*, Nacc:80-81, cey.80; Pē:235, cey.392.

<sup>2</sup> The details provided in the following pages about these 34 components are extremely technical and crisscross because they deal with a highly developed complex and rich poetic system. Wherever possible, I have tried to present them in simple terms.

**eḷuttu** and their quantity. See “Phonology” for a discussion about **eḷuttu** and **māttirai** ‘duration.’<sup>3</sup> The features **acai**, **cīr**, **aṭi**, and **pā** are discussed next.

### **acai** (basic metrical unit)

The basic metrical unit in Tamil prosody is called the **acai** ‘movement’ (< **acai** ‘to move, sway’), which is mostly based on vowel length. Rarely, a consonant attains the status of an **acai**. This is discussed below. See “Metrical Significance of Certain Letters.” There are two basic types of **acai**: **nēr** ‘to be straight; straightness’ and **nirai** ‘to be in a row; array.’ A traditional commentator explains the terms **nēr** and **nirai**. He says that **nēr** is a fine **acai** (“**nēriya acai**”), because it is formed not by two letters (**eḷuttu**) but by one. The **nirai** **acai**, according to him, obtains its name because two **eḷuttu** fall in a row in it and give the meaning, ‘movement of a pair.’<sup>4</sup>

From our perspective, the **nēr** has the pattern (C)V(C)(C) or (C)ṽ(C)(C) and **nirai**, (C)VCV(C)(C) or (C)VCṽ(C)(C). These basic **acai** patterns are expanded and respectively obtain the names **nērupu** and **niraipu** when they represent non-monosyllabic words that are not composed of two short open syllables but end with the short vowel **u**: e.g., ஆடு āṭu ‘to play’ is of the pattern ṽCu, a **nērupu acai**; விட்டு villu ‘bow’ is of the pattern CVCCu, a **nērupu acai**; வரகு varaku ‘millet’ is of the pattern CVCVCu, a **niraipu acai**. Ultimately then, any non-monosyllabic word which is not made up of two short open syllables, but which ends with the

<sup>3</sup> The rest of this chapter presupposes an understanding of Tamil letters (**eḷuttu**). Unlike in the case of the vowels, length/duration of consonants does not play a crucial role in classical Tamil prosody.

<sup>4</sup> “iraṇṭu eḷuttu niraitaliṇ iṇai acai eṇṇum poruḷ paṭa ...” (cf. Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Nacc:8, cey.3).

short vowel **u**, qualifies to be a **nēṛpu** **acai** or a **niraipu** **acai**.<sup>5</sup> More examples are given below.

The two most basic **acai**, **nēr** and **nirai**, are called **iyal acai** 'natural **acai**' because they are used without being modified. Their expanded versions, **nēṛpu** and **niraipu**, which are actually extended basic **acai**, are called **uri acai** 'acai which are proper (for further action)' because they are modified forms of the **iyal acai** and are appropriate for subsequent use.<sup>6</sup> Certain combinations of these four **acai** give rise to what can be

---

<sup>5</sup> One of the commentators explains what is so special about the short vowel **u** at the end of these words (Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Nacc:9, cey.4). He says that the extra-short **u** (**kurriyal ukaram**) at the end of these words cannot be ignored like a vowelless consonant (**orru**) because it sounds longer than a vowelless consonant and at the same time cannot be given a separate identity like a vowel (**uyir**) because it does not sound as long as a vowel. On the other hand, **murriyal ukaram** which is at the end of these words, although has one unit measure of length like a vowel, produces the same kind of sound produced by the extra-short **u** in poetry, and therefore has to be treated like the extra-short **u**.

Thus, the non-monosyllabic word which is not made up of two short open syllables but which ends with the short vowel **u** would simply be a **nēr acai** or a **nirai acai** if the short vowel **u** at the end is ignored. It would be a **nēr-nēr** or a **nirai-nēr**, if the short **u** at the end is given a separate **acai** status. But, the short **u** in these contexts, whether **kurriyal ukaram** or **murriyal ukaram**, should neither be ignored nor should be given a separate **acai** status — hence the special names **nēṛpu** and **niraipu**.

It must be noted that the **kurriyal ukaram** or **murriyal ukaram** in these words is given a separate **acai** status in later Tamil prosody. The concept of **nēṛpu** and **niraipu** is obsolete in the post-classical period and therefore the standard medieval treatise on Tamil prosody, Yāpparūṅkalakkārikai, does not discuss them at all. Words which would have been construed as of the pattern **nēṛpu** or **niraipu** by the earlier convention are treated respectively as of the pattern **nēr-nēr** or **nirai-nēr** in post-classical period. This change in the prosodic convention tells us that the short vowel **u**, whether **kurriyal ukaram** or **murriyal ukaram**, occurring at the end of non-monosyllabic words which are not made up of two short open syllables, was pronounced more strongly in post-classical period so as to gain a prominent place in prosodic analysis.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Nacc:10, cey.6.



called a metrical foot, which in the tradition is known by the generic term **cīr** ‘order, beauty’ which is discussed below.

The term **acai** and syllable

An **acai** is not automatically identical to a syllable. A **nēr acai**, (C)V(C)(C) or (C) $\bar{V}$ (C)(C) is equivalent to a syllable. A **nirai acai**, (C)VCV(C)(C) or (C)VC $\bar{V}$ (C)(C), on the other hand, has two syllables of which the first is always short. Similarly, **nērpū** and **niraipū** has more than one syllable each. The first syllable in **nērpū** can be short or long, whereas the first syllable in **niraipū** is always short. Ultimately then, the maximum number of syllables an **acai** could have is three, giving rise to the pattern **niraipū**, CVCVCCCCV or CVC $\bar{V}$ CCCCV where the last vowel (marked in bold type as **V**) is the short vowel **u**: e.g., வளர்த்து **vaḷarttu**; கலாய்த்து **kalāyttu**. Theoretically, the short vowel **u** at the end could be a **kurriyal ukaram** or a **murriyal ukaram**.

The term **acai** and word

An **acai** does not always contain a meaningful unit. It can be made up of one meaningful unit or part of a meaningful unit. For example, the “word” தேமா (**tēmā** ‘sweet mango’), contains two **acai** which, incidentally, are identical to its two meaningful units தே (**tē** ‘sweet’) and மா (**mā** ‘mango’). Each of these meaningful units is of the **acai** pattern **nēr** (C $\bar{V}$ ). When the meaningful unit மா (**mā** ‘mango’) is used in isolation, it also is a “word.” In this tradition, தேமா (**tēmā**) is a “word” (col) and so are the separate items தே (**tē** ‘sweet’) and மா (**mā** ‘mango’). Similarly, the “word” சாத்தன் (**Cāttan**, a personal name) has two **nēr acai** (சாத் **cāt** - தன் **tan**): சாத் (**cāt**) is a **nēr acai** of the pattern C $\bar{V}$ C, while தன் (**tan**) is a **nēr acai** of the pattern CVC. Here, each **acai** contains a part of the meaningful unit சாத்தன் (**Cāttan**), which is a “word” (col).

### Metrical Significance of Certain Letters (eḷuttu)

A vowelless consonant (**orru**) is not normally given a separate **acai** status. It is treated together with its preceding vowel or a different consonant if there is a consonant cluster, and considered to be part of the **acai** made up of that vowel. But when it occurs as an elongated consonant (**orru aḷapeṭai**), it is treated differently in different contexts. This is explained below. Like an ordinary vowelless consonant, a single **āytam** (**ḥ**) also does not have a separate **acai** status.

The extra-short **i** (**kurriyal ikaram**) is not ignored in the metrical analysis of classical Tamil poems. It is treated like other short vowels. In later literature, it is treated like a vowelless consonant occasionally, and subsequently is not considered as part of an **acai**.<sup>7</sup>

The extra-short **u** (**kurriyal ukaram**) and the **murriyal ukaram** do not make up a separate **acai**. This is the situation whether they are followed by a vowelless consonant as a result of being combined with the following word, or whether they result as the final letter (**eḷuttu**) by deleting the final consonant **m** in the word in which they occur, or whether they occur at the end of the last line in a poem. For example, in நானுத்தன யாக வைகி, *nāṇuttaḷai yāka vaiki* (*aka.29:21*), நானு 'bashfulness', ends with a **murriyal ukaram**. Although followed by the vowelless consonant **ṭ**, as a result of being combined with the following word தன, நானு would be considered as a **nēṛpu acai**, not as **nēr-nēr**. Similarly, in நெருப்புச்சினத் தணிந்த திணந்தயங்கு கொழுங்குறை *neruppucciṇan taṇinta niṇantayaṅku koḷuṅkuṛai* (*pura.125:2*), நெருப்பு 'fire' ends with an extra-short **u**. Although followed by the vowelless consonant **ṣ**, as a result of being combined with the following word சினத் (< சினம் 'fury'), நெருப்பு would be a **niraipu**

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Tolkāppiyam*, *poruḷatikāram*, Pē:132, cey.320; *ḷam*:423, cey.316.

**acai** and would not be treated as **nirai-nēr**.<sup>8</sup> Now, in *pari.20:100*, குடைவிரித் தவைபோலக் கோலு மலர் kuṭaivirin tavaipōlak kōlu malar, கோலு would be a **nērpu**, not **nēr-nēr**. In this item, the final consonant **ம்** in கோலும் 'they open up' is deleted because of the beginning consonant **ம** in the following word மலர், and the word கோலும் is reduced to கோலு with a **murriyal ukaram** at the end. In *pari.6:106*, the last line ends with an extra-short **u**: வாடற்க வையை நினக்கு vāṭarka vaiyai niṇakku. Here, நினக்கு niṇakku 'for you' would be treated as a **niraipu**, not as **nirai-nēr**. Similarly, the last line in *kalittokai 18* ends with an extra-short **u**: சென்ற இளமை தரற்க cenra ilamai taraṅku. தரற்க taraṅku 'for bringing' would be a **niraipu**, not **nirai-nēr**.<sup>9</sup>

When the extra-short **u** (**kurriyal ukaram**) or the **murriyal ukaram** coalesces with a word beginning with the regular short **u**, it is not considered as part of a **nērpu** or a **niraipu**. For example, in *pura.52:1*, நஞ்சுடை வாலெயிற் றைந்தலை சுமந்த nañcuṭai vāleyiṛ raintalai cumanta, நஞ்சுடை is derived from combining நஞ்சு 'poison' + உடை 'having; with.' The word நஞ்சு ends with an extra-short **u**, while the following word உடை begins with the regular short **u**. The two vowels combine and result in one short vowel, **u**. This resultant short **u**, which is contained in சு, is not treated as part of நஞ்சு to yield a **nērpu**. Rather, it is taken together with the following உடை, and thus நஞ்சுடை would be **nēr-nirai** (நஞ்சுடை).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Pē:134, 136, cey.321; ḷam:424, cey.317.

<sup>9</sup> In post-classical prosodic analysis, நாணு(ச்), நெருப்பு(ச்), கோலு(ம்), நினக்கு, and தரற்கு would be treated respectively as having the following patterns: **nēr-nēr**, **nirai-nēr**, **nēr-nēr**, **nirai-nēr**, and **nirai-nēr**. But if any of them were to occur as the very last foot in the last line of a **venpā**, a different scheme (= the classical scheme) would apply the following formulaic names to them: நாணு (= **kācu**), நெருப்பு (= **pirappu**), கோலு (= **kācu**), நினக்கு (= **pirappu**), and தரற்கு (= **pirappu**). Note that these formulaic names themselves end with a short **u**.

When the extra-short **u** or the **murriyal ukaram** is followed by a word beginning with any vowel other than the regular short **u**, it is deleted. For example, in *pura.202:18*, அரும்பற மலர்ந்த கருங்கால் வேங்கை arumpara malarnta karunkāl vēṅkai, அரும்பற is derived from அரும்பு ‘buds’ + அற ‘without.’ Subsequently, அரும்பற would be a **nirai-nirai** (அரும்-பற), not **niraipu-nēr** or anything else.

In general, elongated vowels (**uyir aḷapeṭai**) and elongated consonants (**orru aḷapeṭai**) are treated in two ways: in some instances the second letter (vowel or consonant) in the unit of elongation is given a separate **acai** status and in some others not, depending upon the meter of the line in which it occurs. Furthermore, elongated consonants are treated differently from elongated vowels. This will become clear from the discussion in the following paragraphs.

Examples of elongated vowels that are treated in two ways are as follows. Consider the following line: ஏன யோஒவென் நேலா வவ்விளி (*pari.19:62*). Here, ஏன யோஒவென் would be scanned as ஏ-எ யோஒ-வென் **nēr-nēr nēr-nēr**. The short **e** (எ) which symbolizes the elongation of the long **ē** (ஏ) in ஏன attains the status of an **acai**, whereas the short **o** (ஒ), which symbolizes the elongation of long **ō** in யோஒ, is not taken into account for considering the **acai** pattern of யோஒ.<sup>10</sup> Now consider ஏனஇன கிளத்தலி னினைமைநற் கறிந்தனம் (*pari.3:62*). Here, ஏனஇன would be scanned as ஏ-எ-இன, **nēr-nirai**. Consequently, the short **e** (எ) which symbolizes the elongation of the long **ē** (ஏ) in ஏன is not taken into account for considering

---

<sup>10</sup> Hypothetically, if ஏன யோஒவென் நேலா வவ்விளி is scanned as ஏ-எ யோ-ஒவென் நே-லா வவ்-விளி, the **acai** patterns would be as follows: **nēr-nēr nēr-nirai nēr-nēr nēr-nirai**. This would produce an **iyarcir-veṇ-taḷai** between யோ-ஒவென் and நே-லா. But, if the line is scanned as ஏ-எ யோஒ-வென் நே-லா வவ்-விளி, the **acai** patterns would be as follows: **nēr-nēr nēr-nēr nēr-nēr nēr-nirai**. This would produce an **āciriya-t-taḷai** between யோஒ-வென் and நே-லா, which is preferred in this context.

the *acai* pattern of எ. <sup>11</sup> In எ யோஒ வென விளி யேற்பிக்க (*pari.19:61*), எ யோஒ would be scanned as எ-எ யோ-ஒ, *nēr-nēr nēr-nēr*. Notice that in this context the short o (ஒ) which symbolizes the elongation of long ō in யோஒ does attain the status of a separate *acai*.

When the word containing an elongated vowel ends with a *kurriyal ukaram* or a *murriyal ukaram*, the short vowel which symbolizes the elongation of the long vowel is separated from the long vowel and subsequently joined with the following letter(s) for the sake of its *acai* status. For example, ஆஅங்கு would be treated as *nēr-nērpu* (ஆ-அங்கு), ஆஅவது as *nēr-niraipu* (ஆ-அவது), புகாஅர்த்து as *nirai-nērpu* (புகா-அர்த்து), and பராஅயது as *nirai-niraipu* (பரா-அயது). But, if the word is யாஅது, it would be treated like *nēr-nirai* (யா-அது), not as *nēr-niraipu*, because the component அது by itself does not end with a *kurriyal ukaram* or a *murriyal ukaram* so as to yield a *niraipu* pattern. Similarly, வடாஅது (*pura.6:1*) would be treated like *nirai-nirai* (வடா-அது) not as *nirai-niraipu*, and it would be referred to by the formulaic name *kaṇaviri* (கணவிரி). <sup>12</sup>

When a consonant is elongated and written as two, the second one may occasionally attain the status of an *acai*. For example, in *malai:352*, கண்ண தண்ணெனக் கண்டும் கேட்டும் (*kaṇṇ taṇṇenak kaṇṭum kēṭṭum*), the first item கண்ண (*kaṇṇ < kaṇ* 'eye') is to be scanned as கண்-ண், *nēr-nēr*. That is, in கண்ண, *kaṇṇ*, the second element *ṇ* (ண்) in the elongated consonant *ṇṇ* (ண்ண) attains a separate *acai* status. But, the second element *ṇ* (ண்) in the elongated consonant *ṇṇ* (ண்ண) does not attain a separate *acai* status in the item தண்ணெனக், which is to be scanned as தண்ண்-னெனக், *nēr-nirai*. <sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> If எஎஇன is scanned as எ-எஇ-ன, it would become a different foot of the pattern *nēr-nirai-nēr*, a foot with three *acai*, which is not appropriate in this context. Therefore, the short எ has to be discounted.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Tolkāppiyam*, *poruḷatikāram*, *Nacc:20*, *cey.17*.

<sup>13</sup> Commentators explain that in this situation, the poet who composed the poem

When the word containing an elongated consonant ends with a **kurriyal ukaram** or a **murriyal ukaram**, the second item in the elongated consonant does not attain a separate **acai** status. For example, words like கொங்ங்கு , குரங்ங்கு, மின்னனு, எஃஃகு, etc., are to be considered simply as **nērpū** or **niraipu**, not to be scanned as, for example, **nēr-nēr** (கொங்-ங்ங்கு) or **nēr-nēr-nēr** (கொங்-ங்-ங்ங்கு). கொங்ங்கு , மின்னனு , and எஃஃகு would each be a **nērpū**, whereas குரங்ங்கு would be a **niraipu**.<sup>14</sup> But, if the words are கொங்ங்கர் instead of கொங்ங்கு, குரங்ங்கன் instead of குரங்ங்கு, மின்னன் instead of மின்னனு , and எஃஃகம் instead of எஃஃகு, they would be considered as having the patterns **nēr-nēr** (கொங்-ங்-கர்), **nirai-nēr** (குரங்-ங்-கன்), **nēr-nēr** (மின்ன-ன்), and **nēr-nēr** (எஃஃ-கம்), or the patterns **nēr-nēr-nēr** (கொங்-ங்-கர்), **nirai-nēr-nēr** (குரங்-ங்-கன்), **nēr-nēr-nēr** (மின்-ன்-ன்), and **nēr-nēr-nēr** (எஃ-ஃ-கம்), depending upon the contexts in which they occur. Note that they should not be scanned as கொங்-ங்ங்கர், குரங்-ங்ங்கன், மின்-ன்-ன், or எஃ-ஃகம். Recall that the second element in an elongated vowel would be treated differently in a similar environment. Here, the difference between the treatment of elongated vowels and that of elongated consonants becomes evident.

Examples of the **nēr acai** patterns:

<b>anna</b> ‘like that’ ( <i>aink.149:1</i> )	<b>aṇ-ṇa</b>	<b>nēr-nēr</b>
---	--------------	----------------

*malaipaṭukaṭām* lengthened the ண் (ṇ) in தண் (taṇ ‘cold’) to ண்ண் (ṇṇ) just in order to indicate the extremity of the cold on the mountain and therefore the second ண் in தண்ண் has to be treated only as a part of தண், not as a separate item (Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Nacc:22, cey.18).

In fact, if தண்ண்ணைக் is scanned as தண்-ண்-ண்ணைக் resulting in the pattern **nēr-nēr-nirai**, it would produce a certain metrical foot called **vañci-uri-c-ṭīr** which is appropriate to occur in this line.

<sup>14</sup> Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Nacc:22, cey.17; Pē:154, cey.330.

ekkar ‘white sand’ ( <i>aiṅk.148:1</i> )	ek-kar	nēr-nēr
ōtam ‘ocean’ ( <i>aiṅk.145:2</i> )	ō-tam	nēr-nēr
aṇṇāy ‘O mother!’ ( <i>aiṅk.201:1</i> )	aṇ-ṇāy	nēr-nēr
īrntaṇ ‘fresh and cool’ ( <i>aiṅk.213:2</i> )	īrn-taṇ	nēr-nēr
yāyē ‘my mother, indeed’ ( <i>aiṅk.253:4</i> )	yā-yē	nēr-nēr
āmpal ‘water lily’ ( <i>puṛa.63:13</i> )	ām-pal	nēr-nēr
pōlnta ‘split’ ( <i>aka.41:6</i> )	pōln-ta	nēr-nēr
poyccūḷ ‘false promise’ ( <i>kali.75:21</i> )	poyc-cūḷ	nēr-nēr
eykkum ‘it will weaken’ ( <i>kuṛu.112:1</i> )	eyk-kum	nēr-nēr

[The **nēr acai** of the pattern in which a short vowel could occur alone in the beginning of a word is not common unless there is hiatus between itself and the following word, as for example, a **ā iḷaṇṭān** ‘O, Alas! He lost it’ (*nālaṭiyār 9:4*). This pattern of the **nēr acai** is not found in the **caṅkam** anthologies.]

Examples of the **nirai acai** patterns:

maṇamukai ‘fragrant bud’ ( <i>aka.42:1</i> )	maṇa-mukai	nirai-nirai
kaṇicciyum ‘and the trident’ ( <i>kali.105:20</i> )	kaṇic-ciyum	nirai-nirai
uritiṇḷ ‘rightfully’ ( <i>aka.10:7</i> )	uri-tiṇḷ	nirai-nirai
uṭaitarum ‘breaking’ ( <i>aka.10:9</i> )	uṭai-tarum	nirai-nirai
uruppavir ‘where the heat unfolds’ ( <i>aka.11:2</i> )	urup-pavir	nirai-nirai
ayirtukaḷ ‘sand dust’ ( <i>narr.163:2</i> )	ayirt-tukaḷ	nirai-nirai

tĩmpukārt ‘pleasant Pukār’ ( <i>paṭṭ</i> :173)	tĩm-pukārt	nēr-nirai
kamaḷkaṭām ‘smelling rut of the elephant’ ( <i>kali</i> .48:5)	kamaḷ-kaṭām	nirai-nirai
makiḷnta ‘those who rejoiced’ ( <i>narr</i> .239:2)	makiḷn-ta	nirai-nēr

Examples of the **nērp**u acai patterns:

kūmpuviṭu ‘splitting conical (buds)’ ( <i>aka</i> .36:4)	kūmpu-viṭu	nērp <u>u</u> -nirai
cevicāyttu ‘leaning the ear’ ( <i>aka</i> .63:10)	cevi-cāyttu	nirai-nērp <u>u</u>
āṭuvaḷi ‘while playing’ ( <i>aka</i> .49:18)	āṭu-vaḷi	nērp <u>u</u> -nirai
pāṛutalai ‘wide-spread top’ ( <i>aka</i> .21:15)	pāṛu-talai	nērp <u>u</u> -nirai
piṛarttantu ‘bringing others’ ( <i>aka</i> .28:40)	piṛart-tantu	nirai-nērp <u>u</u>
nillunī ‘You, just stop!’ ( <i>pari</i> .18:39)	nillu-nī	nērp <u>u</u> -nēr
añcuvara ‘frightening’ ( <i>aka</i> .63:9)	añcu-vara	nērp <u>u</u> -nirai
illuyttu ‘sending toward home’ ( <i>kuṛu</i> .354:3)	il-luyttu	nēr-nērp <u>u</u>
nīrkkunimirntu ( <i>aka</i> .79:6) ‘straightening up for (going toward) water’	nīrkku-nimirntu	nērp <u>u</u> -niraipu
īṇrupuraṇ tarutal ( <i>pura</i> .312:1) ‘bringing forth, having given birth’	īṇru-puraṇ	nērp <u>u</u> -nirai



Examples of the **niraipu** acai patterns:

muṭaṅkutāl 'bending leg' (aka.63:5)	muṭaṅku-tāl	niraipu-nēr
kuvavunutal 'curved forehead' (aka.49:6)	kuvavu-nutal	niraipu-nirai
valviraintu 'rushing fast' (aka.47:2)	val-viraintu	nēr-niraipu
alaṅkukaḷai 'swaying bamboo' (aka.47:4)	alaṅku-kaḷai	niraipu-nirai
palavukkaṇi 'jack fruit' (kuru.90:4)	palavuk-kaṇi	niraipu-nirai
iṟavukkalittu 'the fish, being excited' (aka.96:1)	iṟavuk-kalittu	niraipu-niraipu
nacai yurātu 'without experiencing' (poru:2)	yurātu	niraipu
irātu 'without sitting on ...' (aka.141:21)	irātu	niraipu

**cīr** (metrical foot)

Combinations of the four basic acai (**nēr**, **nirai**, **nēru**, and **niraipu**) give rise to metrical feet which are known by the generic term **cīr** 'order, beauty.' A traditional commentator explains that such combination is called **cīr** because it stands similar to **pāṇi**, which is the beginning of a rhythmic beat falling into a cycle.<sup>15</sup> He also explains that a rhythmic cycle (**tālam**)

<sup>15</sup> "pāṇi pōṇru ilayam paṭa niṟṟal" (Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Pē:141, cey.324).

has three components, namely **pāṇi**, **tūkku**, and **cīr**, in which the **pāṇi** marks the beginning of the cycle while the **tūkku** contains the duration of the cycle and the **cīr** marks the time lapse of the cycle.<sup>16</sup> Another commentator says that **cīr** by itself brings sound (**ōcai**) to a poem.<sup>17</sup>

Types of **cīr**

The four basic **acai** are combined being chosen two or three at a time. The metrical feet obtained by combining two **acai** at a time are called **īr-acai-c-cīr** ‘**cīr** with two **acai**’ and those which are obtained by combining three at a time are **mū-v-acai-c-cīr** ‘**cīr** with three **acai**.’ Rarely in classical Tamil poems four **acai** are combined to form a **four-acai-c-cīr** (e.g., புறம்-பெற்றிசி-கே *pura.11:9*). Since there are four basic **acai** to choose from, the number of possible two-**acai** patterns (**īr-acai-c-cīr**) is 16 (= 4<sup>n</sup>, where n = 2) and the number of possible three-**acai** patterns (**mū-v-acai-c-cīr**) is 64 (= 4<sup>n</sup>, where n = 3).

There are situations where none of the four basic **acai** has to combine with another to form a metrical foot, and such foot is called an **ōr-acai-c-cīr** ‘**cīr** composed of one **acai**.’ In those instances, the single **acai** has to coincide with a meaningful word. It appears mostly as the last foot of a line in certain types of meters like the **ācīriyam** and **veṇṇpā**, while always occurring as the last **cīr** of the last line in a poem composed solely in the **veṇṇpā** meter.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar’s commentary on *kali.1:7, 10, 13, 15*: “oru tālatṭiṇ mutal eṭukkum kālatṭiṇai uṭaiya pāṇi”; “ataṇ iṭai nikaḷum kālattu ataṇai uṭaiya tūkku”; “tāḷam muṭintuviṭum kālatṭiṇait taṇṇiṭattē koṇṭa cīr.”

<sup>17</sup> Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Iḷam:443, cey.361.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Iḷam:432, cey.335; Nacc:31, cey.27; Pē:165, 228, cey.339, 386.

For example, consider *aka.141:20*, which is in the **ācīriyam** meter: தீங்குடை வாழை

## Two Conventions of Evaluating a *cīr*

Two different conventions provide different ways of considering a metrical foot (*cīr*). One is to view *cīr* as composed of so many basic units known as *acai*, while the other is more fundamental and views a foot as consisting of so many letters (*eḷuttu*).

When a metrical foot is construed in terms of the number of letters in it, vowelless consonants (*orru*), *āyṭam* (*ḥ*), and the extra-short *u* (*kurriyal ukaram*) are not taken into account. Thus, for example, if வண்டு *vaṇṭu* 'bee' is used as a *cīr*, it would be considered as containing just one *eḷuttu* வ *va*. Here, the last two *eḷuttu* in வண்டு would be ignored because the penultimate *eḷuttu* ண *ṇ* is a vowelless consonant, whereas the last *eḷuttu* டு *ṭu* contains the extra-short *u*. Once the extra-short *u* in டு *ṭu* is ignored, the remaining ட *ṭ* becomes a vowelless consonant and will be ignored subsequently. Similarly, if சூயிறு *ñāyīru* 'sun' is a *cīr*, it would be considered as containing just two *eḷuttu* சூ *ñā* and யி *yi*, because the last item று *ru*, which contains the extra-short *u*, would be ignored.

The two different modes of considering a metrical foot mean that certain feet are treated in two ways. Thus, if வண்டு *vaṇṭu* is used as a *cīr* in a poem, the extra-short *u* in it would be considered for determining its *acai* pattern, but not for being counted as an *eḷuttu*. The pattern of வண்டு is CVC-Cu, and so it is a *nērupu acai*. And it would be referred to

---

யோங்குமட லிராது *ṭīṅkulai vālai yōṅku maṭa lirātu*. Here, the last item லிராது (< ட், part of the preceding word மடல் 'leaf' + இராது 'without sitting on') is a *niraipu acai* of the pattern CVCVCu and makes up a *cīr*. Similarly, the last line in *pari.6:106* is in the *veṇṇā* meter and its last *cīr* is a single *acai*: வாடற்க வையை நினக்கு *vāṭarka vaiyai niṇakku*. Here, நினக்கு 'for you' is a *niraipu*. In *kalittokai* 24, which ends in the *veṇṇā* meter, the last line has a single *acai* as its last *cīr*: போயின்று சொல்லென் உயிர் *pōyīṇṇu collēṇ uyir*. In later texts, *veṇṇā* meter is very common and the last line of each *veṇṇā* ends with just one *acai* making up a *cīr* by itself. For example, consider *muttolḷāyiram* 27:4: என்பெறு வாடுமென் தோள் *eṇṇēṭṭā vāṭumeṇ ṭōḷ*, in which தோள் is a *nēr acai*.

as a **cīr** with one **acai** (**ōr-acai-c-cīr**). But, when it is to be referred to in terms of the **eḷuttu** it contains, it would be a **cīr** consisting of just one **eḷuttu**. Similarly, in ஞாயிறு **ñāyiru**, the று containing the extra-short **u** would be considered for deciding the **acai** pattern of ஞாயிறு, but not for being counted as an **eḷuttu**. Thus, the pattern of ஞாயிறு is C $\bar{V}$ -CVCu, **nēr-niraipu**, and the word would be referred to as a **cīr** made up of two **acai** (**īr-acai-c-cīr**) and as containing two **eḷuttu**.

The number of **acai** in a metrical foot is not always equal to the number of letters in it. Consider for example, குறும்பொறைமருங்கு **kuṟumporaimaruṅku** ‘near the small rock.’ It is made up of three **acai**: குறும் -பொறை-மருங்கு **kuṟum-porai-maruṅku**. The first **acai**, குறும் is a **nirai** of the pattern CVCVC. The second, பொறை, is a **nirai** of the pattern CVC $\bar{V}$ . The third one, மருங்கு, is a **niraipu** of the pattern CVCVCCu. When the **eḷuttu** in குறும்பொறைமருங்கு are counted, the vowelless consonants (ம் and ங்) and the **eḷuttu** containing the extra-short **u** (**kuṟriyal ukaram**) at the end are left out, and so the resulting number of countable **eḷuttu** are six: கு, று, பொ, றை, ம, and ரு. Thus, the **cīr** குறும்பொறைமருங்கு has three **acai**, but six **eḷuttu**.<sup>19</sup>

The Number of Letters (**eḷuttu**) Permitted in a Metrical Foot (**cīr**)

The tradition holds that a **cīr** normally does not contain more than five **eḷuttu** and only a certain type of metrical foot called the **vañci**

<sup>19</sup> The mode of understanding a metrical foot in terms of the number of letters in it was necessary in the history of Tamil when lines in a poem were composed based on the number of letters. One traditional commentator explains that this practice was difficult for the poets of the last **caṅkam** (“kaṭai-c-caṅkattārkkū”) and therefore they composed lines in a poem based on the number of metrical feet instead (cf. *Tolkāppiyam*, *poruḷatikāram*, *Nacc:52, cey.51*).

**uriccīr** would contain a maximum of six **eluttu**.<sup>20</sup> The minimum number of **eluttu** in a **vañci uriccīr**, which produces the meter called **vañci**, is three.<sup>21</sup> Examples:

தூங்குகையான் ஓங்குநடைய	<i>pura.22:1</i>
தூ கை யா (three <b>eluttu</b> ); ஓ ந டை ய (four <b>eluttu</b> )	
உறழ்மணியான் உயர்மருப்பின	<i>pura.22:2</i>
உ ற ம ணி யா (five <b>eluttu</b> ); உ ய ம ரு பி ன (six <b>eluttu</b> )	
இலக்கம்போன்றன : இ ல க போ ற ன (six <b>eluttu</b> )	<i>pura.4:11</i>
விறல்வேந்தனும்மே : வி ற வே த னு மே (six <b>eluttu</b> )	<i>pura.11:7</i>

### The Term **cīr** and Syllable

It is obvious that a Tamil metrical foot (**cīr**) is not identical to a syllable. Note that the maximum number of syllables a foot can have is nine giving rise to the pattern **niraipu-niraipu-niraipu**, CVCVC(C)(C)V-CVCVC(C)(C)V-CVCVC(C)(C)V, where in each **niraipu**, the first vowel is always short, the second one can be short or long, but the last vowel (marked in bold type as **V**) must always be a short **u** (**kurriyal ukaram** or **murriyal ukaram**). Examples: விலங்கு -வழங்கு -பொருப்பு (**vilāṅku-valāṅku-poruppu**); உராய்ந்து -உராய்ந்து -கலாய்த்து (**urāyntu-urāyntu-kalāyttu**).

### The Term **cīr** and Word

A word can spread across two metrical feet. By the same token, a foot can contain more than one word. For example, in *aka.56:16*, மம்மம்

<sup>20</sup> Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Nacc.41, cey.42; Pē:181, cey.354.

<sup>21</sup> Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Nacc:44, cey.46.

நெஞ்சினோன் தொழுதுநின் றதுவே **mammar neñcinōn tolutunin ratuvē**, the word நின்றது **ninratu** ‘the state of standing’ is spread between the last foot and the penultimate foot. The penultimate foot தொழுதுநின், on the other hand, contains more than the word தொழுது **tolutu** ‘worshipping.’

### Meters Produced by Different cīr

Various types of metrical feet produce four types of classical Tamil meter, namely, **ācīriyam**, **vañci**, **veṇṇpā**, and **kali**. Meter (pā) is discussed below. The **iyarcīr** ‘natural cīr’ and the **ācīriya uriccīr** ‘cīr which are appropriate for the ācīriyam’ produce the meter called the **ācīriyam**. The **veṇ cīr** ‘cīr which are appropriate for the veṇṇpā’ produce the **veṇṇpā** and **kali** meters. The **vañci uriccīr** ‘cīr which are appropriate for the vañci’ produce the **vañci** meter. These various feet are discussed next.

### Formulaic Names for the Different cīr

In the tradition, each combination of the various **acai** is given a formulaic name (**vāypāṭu**) which in turn exemplifies the structure of the **cīr** it stands for. These names differ according to different schools. However, each **acai** which participates in making up a **cīr** is given a name which is an adjective, verb, or a noun referring to an entity from nature. Examples: **tē** ‘sweet’; **puli** ‘tart’; **vāl** ‘to live’; **pōku** ‘going’; **varu** ‘coming’; **puli** ‘tiger’; **pāmpu** ‘snake’; **mā** ‘mango’; **viḷa** ‘wood-apple’; **kāy** ‘unripe fruit’; **kaṇi** ‘ripe fruit’; **vāy** ‘pass, path’; **kāṇ** ‘jungle’; **curam** ‘forest’; **kaṭaṟu** ‘forest, jungle’; **kār** ‘cloud’; **urumu** ‘thunder.’ Thus, **nēr-nēr** is given the formulaic name **tē-mā** (தேமா ‘sweet mango’); **nēr-nēr-nēr** is given the name **tē-mā(ñ)-kāy** (தேமாங்காய் ‘sweet unripe mango’), and so on. The combinations of various **acai** and their names are given below. Certain combinations are considered to be appropriate for certain types of meters and this information is included in the discussion below.

### iyarċir “natural feet”

These are **ir-acai-c-ċir**, obtained by combining two **acai** at a time. The first one of these two-**acai** combinations could be **nēr**, **nirai**, **nērpū**, or **niraipu**, and the restriction is on the second **acai**. The second should be a **nēr** when the first is a **nērpū** or a **niraipu**. Thus, ten patterns of the **iyarċir** are obtained as follows.

iyarċir	acai pattern	formulaic name
nēr nēr	நேர் நேர்	(தேமா or வாய்க்கால்)
nirai nēr	நிரை நேர்	(புளிமா or துலவாய்)
nirai nirai	நிரை நிரை	(கருவிளம் or கணவிரி)
nēr nirai	நேர் நிரை	(கூவிளம் or பாதிரி)
nēr nērpū	நேர் நேர்பு	(மாங்காடு or போரேறு; treated like பாதிரி)
nirai nērpū	நிரை நேர்பு	(களங்காடு or கடியாறு; treated like கணவிரி)
nirai niraipu	நிரை நிரைபு	(கடிகுரங்கு or மழகளிறு; treated like கணவிரி)
nēr niraipu	நேர் நிரைபு	(மாங்குரங்கு or பூமருது; treated like பாதிரி)
nērpū nēr	நேர்பு நேர்	(ஆற்றுக்கால் or நீத்துநீர்; treated like பாதிரி)
niraipu nēr	நிரைபு நேர்	(குளத்துக்கால் or குளத்துநீர்; treated like கணவிரி)

The above **iyarċir** are permissible in all four types of classical Tamil meter. However, there are some restrictions.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Two specific **iyarċir** ending with a **nēr** do not occur in a **kalippā** and are not preferred as the first metrical feet of a line in a certain type of **vañcippā**. That is, **nēr-nēr** (தேமா) and **nirai-nēr** (புளிமா) do not occur to produce the metrical binding (**taḷai**) known as **kalittaḷai**. They are more common at the end of a line with only two feet producing the

**āciriya uriccīr ‘cīr which are proper for the āciriya meter’**

These metrical feet also are obtained by combining two **acai** at a time. In these, the first **acai** is either a **nērpū** or a **niraipu**. The second is **nērpū**, **niraipu**, or **nirai**. Six such combinations are possible:

āciriya uriccīr acai pattern	formulaic name
nērpū nērpū      நேர்பு நேர்பு	(ஆற்றுநோக்கு or வீடுபேறு)
niraipu nērpū      நிரைபு நேர்பு	(வரகுசோறு)
niraipu niraipu      நிரைபு நிரைபு	(வரகுதவிடு or தடவுமருது)

**vañci** meter (Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Nacc:30, cey.25; Pē:162-164, cey.337). Consider *pura.2:1*, மண்டினிந்த நிலனும், which is a **vañci** line, in which the second foot நிலனும் is of the pattern **nirai-nēr**. See below for the definitions of a metrical binding and **vañci** line.

This restriction does not apply to a **vañci** line which has three feet (Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Nacc:31, cey.26). Consider பந்த ரந்தரம் வேய்ந்து (*pati.51:16*), which is a **vañci** line made up of three metrical feet. Here, the first foot பந்த is of the pattern **nēr-nēr** (தேமா). Now, consider *pura.7:1*, which is a **vañci** line with two metrical feet: களிறு கடைஇயதாள். Here, the first foot களிறு is of the pattern **niraipu**, not **nirai-nēr**.

The two **iyarcīr** ending with **nirai** (**nēr-nirai** and **nirai-nirai**) can occur as the first foot of a **vañci** line (Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Nacc:30-31, cey.26). For example, in வாலிணர் மடற்றாழை (*paṭṭ:118*), வாலிணர் is of the pattern **nēr-nirai**. In அகல்வயன் மலைவேலி (*pura.17:10*), அகல்வயன் is of the pattern **nirai-nirai**.

The two **iyarcīr** in which the first **acai** is a **nērpū** or a **niraipu** (**nērpū-nēr** and **niraipu-nēr**) are treated like **nēr-nirai** and **nirai-nirai** respectively (Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, Pē:146, 147, cey.327; Nacc:19, cey.15). For example, in ஓங்குமலைப் பெருவில் பாம்புஞாண் கொளீஇ (*pura.55:1*), பாம்புஞாண் is of the pattern **nērpū-nēr**, but will be treated like **nēr-nirai** when its binding with the following foot is to be considered. In வருந்துநாய் நாவின் பெருந்தகு சீறடி (*poru.42*), வருந்துநாய் is of the pattern **niraipu-nēr**, but will be treated like **nirai-nirai** when its binding with the following foot is to be considered.





**venṇpā uriccīr** ‘cīr which are appropriate for the **venṇpā** meter’

These are metrical feet obtained by combining three **acai** at a time in a specific manner. Normally, 64 combinations are possible if one combines three **acai** at a time from the group of the four basic **acai**. Of those 64 resulting combinations, the ones in which the third **acai** is a **nēr**, and neither of the other two is a **nērpū** or a **niraipu**, are called the **venṇpā uriccīr**. Actually, to obtain them, the **acai** called **nēr** is added as the third **acai** to the **iyarcīr** discussed above in which none of the **acai** is a **nērpū** or a **niraipu**. Four such combinations are possible in the following manner.

**venṇpā uriccīr acai pattern**

**formulaic name**

<b>nēr nēr nēr</b>	நேர் நேர் நேர்	(தேமாங்காய் OR மாவாழ்கான்)
<b>nirai nēr nēr</b>	நிரை நேர் நேர்	(புளிமாங்காய் OR புலிவாழ்கான்)
<b>nirai nirai nēr</b>	நிரை நிரை நேர்	(கருவிளங்காய் OR புலிவருகான்)
<b>nēr nirai nēr</b>	நேர் நிரை நேர்	(கூவிளங்காய் OR மாவருகான்)

The **venṇcīr**, as their name suggests, produce the meter called **venṇpā**. They are permissible in a **vañci** line which does not produce the binding

example, in உரவுத்தகை மழுங்கித்தன் இடும்பையா லொருவனை (*kali.120:4*), உரவுத்தகை is of the pattern **niraipu-nirai**. It produces **kalittaḷai** when considered together with the following foot.

All the other **āciriya uriccīr** (**nērpū-nērpū**, **niraipu-nērpū**, **niraipu-niraipu**, and **nērpū-niraipu**) are permissible in certain **kalippā** where the line is known as **cīr-vakai-k-kali-aṭi** (Nacc:29, cey.24).

Examples: In ஆடுகொள் நேமியாற் பரவுதும் நாடுகொண்டு (*kali.105:72*), நாடுகொண்டு is of the pattern **nērpū-nērpū**, and the rest of the line produces **āciriyaṭṭai**. In தாழ்புதுறந்து தொடிநெகிழ்த்தான் போகிய கானம் (*kali.145:18*), தாழ்புதுறந்து is **nērpū-niraipu**, and the line produces **ven-ṭai**.

called **vañci-t-talai**.<sup>25</sup> For example, in புட்டேம்பப் புயன்மாறி (*paṭṭ:4*), both feet are **veñcīr**. The first one புட்டேம்பப் is of the pattern **nēr-nēr-nēr** and the second, புயன்மாறி, **nirai-nēr-nēr**. The combination of the two produces **kali-t-talai**, not a **vañci-t-talai**. However, the sound recognized is “**tūṅkal ōcai**.” Similarly, in வியனாண்மீ னெறியொருக (*matu:6*), which is a **vañci** line, the feet are of the patterns **nirai-nēr-nēr** and **nirai-nirai-nēr** respectively and produce **kalittalai**.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Pē:159, cey.334.

<sup>26</sup> A commentator notes that it is better to permit just one **veñcīr** in a line in an **āciriyaṭṭā** (Nacc:34, cey.30). The **veñcīr** do not occur in an **āciriyaṭṭā** (Nacc:29, cey.23; Pē:160, cey.335) when the lines have to produce only **āciriyaṭṭalai**. But they are permissible if they harmonize with the rest of the **cīr** in a line producing **āciriyaṭṭalai** or **veṇ talai**. For example, in தமிழ்தலை மயங்கிய தலையாலங் கானத்து (*puṇa.19:2*), தலையாலங் is of the pattern **nirai-nēr-nēr** and கானத்து is **nēr-nirai-pu**. However, தலையாலங் binds harmoniously with its preceding foot மயங்கிய producing an **āciriyaṭṭalai**. Therefore, the **veñcīr** தலையாலங் is allowed in this line. Similarly, in யந்தளிர்க் குவவுமொயம் பலைப்பச் சாந்தருந்தி (*kuri:120*), சாந்தருந்தி is of the pattern **nēr-nirai-nēr**. It combines with the preceding foot and produces an **āciriyaṭṭalai**. In கண்டோ ரெல்லா மமர்ந்தினிதி னோக்கி (*malai:496*), மமர்ந்தினிதி is of the pattern **nirai-nirai-nēr**. It binds with the preceding foot producing one type of **veṇ talai** (**iyarcīr veṇ talai**) and binds with the following foot producing another type of **veṇ talai** (**veṇ cīr veṇ talai**).

The **veñcīr** can occur in a **kalippā** to produce the metrical binding called **kalittalai** (Nacc:33, cey.29; Pē:168-169, cey.341). If all the four feet are **veñcīr**, the first **acai** of the last foot would be treated like a **nirai** (I:432, cey.337; Nacc:33, cey.29; Pē:168-169, cey.341) even if it happens to be a **nēr**; the metrical binding then obtains the name **kalittalai**. Examples: In அரிதாய வறனெய்தி யருளியோர்க் களித்தலும் (*kali.11:1*), the feet are of the patterns **nirai-nēr-nēr** (அரி-தா-ய), **nirai-nēr-nēr** (வற-னெய்-தி), **nirai-nirai** (யரு-ளியோர்க்), and **nirai-nirai** (களித்-தலும்). The first two **veñcīr** produce **kalittalai**. The second one binds with the third, which is an **iyarcīr**, producing **kalittalai**. But, in அடிதாங்கு மளவின்றி யமுலன்ன வெம்மையாற் (*kali.11:6*), the penultimate foot, which is a **veñcīr** of the pattern **nirai-nēr-nēr** (யமு-லன்-ன), binds with the last foot whose first **acai** is treated like a **nirai** although it is a **nēr** (வெம்-மையாற்), producing

**vañci uriccīr** ‘cīr which are proper for the **vañci** meter’

These are also metrical feet obtained by combining three **acai** at a time in a specific manner. Of the 64 possible combinations of feet containing three **acai** at a time, 60 are considered to produce what is called the **vañci** meter and therefore are known as the **vañci uriccīr**. In this type of foot, if the third **acai** is a **nēr**, one or both of the other two are **nērpū** or **niraipu**. The 60 possible combinations of the **vañci uriccīr** are given below. Although these feet are treated separately, they are considered as belonging to the group of **veñcīr**.<sup>27</sup>

<b>vañci uriccīr</b>	<b>acai pattern</b>	<b>formulaic name</b>
1. nēr nēr nirai	நேர் நேர் நிரை	(மா வாழ் நெறி)
2. nēr nēr nērpū	நேர் நேர் நேர்பு	(மா வாழ் காடு)
3. nēr nēr niraipu	நேர் நேர் நிரைபு	(மா வாழ் பொருப்பு)
4. nēr nirai nirai	நேர் நிரை நிரை	(மா வரு நெறி)
5. nēr nirai nērpū	நேர் நிரை நேர்பு	(மா வரு காடு)
6. nēr nirai niraipu	நேர் நிரை நிரைபு	(மா வரு பொருப்பு)
7. nēr nērpū nēr	நேர் நேர்பு நேர்	(மா போகு கான்)
8. nēr nērpū nirai	நேர் நேர்பு நிரை	(மா போகு நெறி)
9. nēr nērpū nērpū	நேர் நேர்பு நேர்பு	(மா போகு காடு)
10. nēr nērpū niraipu	நேர் நேர்பு நிரைபு	(மா போகு பொருப்பு)
11. nēr niraipu nēr	நேர் நிரைபு நேர்	(மா வழங்கு கான்)
12. nēr niraipu nirai	நேர் நிரைபு நிரை	(மா வழங்கு நெறி)
13. nēr niraipu nērpū	நேர் நிரைபு நேர்பு	(மா வழங்கு காடு)
14. nēr niraipu niraipu	நேர் நிரைபு நிரைபு	(மா வழங்கு பொருப்பு)

**kalittaḷai** (Pē:169-170, cey.341).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. “vañci uriccīrum taṇ cīr ākaliṇ” Pē:205, cey.367.

15. nirai nēr nirai	நிரை நேர் நிரை	(புலி வாழ் நெறி)
16. nirai nēr nēru	நிரை நேர் நேர்பு	(புலி வாழ் காடு)
17. nirai nēr niraipu	நிரை நேர் நிரைபு	(புலி வாழ் பொருப்பு)
18. nirai nirai nirai	நிரை நிரை நிரை	(புலி வரு நெறி)
19. nirai nirai nēru	நிரை நிரை நேர்பு	(புலி வரு காடு)
20. nirai nirai niraipu	நிரை நிரை நிரைபு	(புலி வரு பொருப்பு)
21. nirai nēru nēr	நிரை நேர்பு நேர்	(புலி போகு கான்)
22. nirai nēru nirai	நிரை நேர்பு நிரை	(புலி போகு நெறி)
23. nirai nēru nēru	நிரை நேர்பு நேர்பு	(புலி போகு காடு)
24. nirai nēru niraipu	நிரை நேர்பு நிரைபு	(புலி போகு பொருப்பு)
25. nirai niraipu nēr	நிரை நிரைபு நேர்	(புலி வழங்கு கான்)
26. nirai niraipu nirai	நிரை நிரைபு நிரை	(புலி வழங்கு நெறி)
27. nirai niraipu nēru	நிரை நிரைபு நேர்பு	(புலி வழங்கு காடு)
28. nirai niraipu niraipu	நிரை நிரைபு நிரைபு	(புலி வழங்கு பொருப்பு)
29. nēru nēr nēr	நேர்பு நேர் நேர்	(பாம்பு வாழ் கான்)
30. nēru nēr nirai	நேர்பு நேர் நிரை	(பாம்பு வாழ் நெறி)
31. nēru nēr nēru	நேர்பு நேர் நேர்பு	(பாம்பு வாழ் காடு)
32. nēru nēr niraipu	நேர்பு நேர் நிரைபு	(பாம்பு வாழ் பொருப்பு)
33. nēru nirai nēr	நேர்பு நிரை நேர்	(பாம்பு வரு கான்)
34. nēru nirai nirai	நேர்பு நிரை நிரை	(பாம்பு வரு நெறி)
35. nēru nirai nēru	நேர்பு நிரை நேர்பு	(பாம்பு வரு காடு)
36. nēru nirai niraipu	நேர்பு நிரை நிரைபு	(பாம்பு வரு பொருப்பு)
37. nēru nēru nēr	நேர்பு நேர்பு நேர்	(பாம்பு போகு கான்)
38. nēru nēru nirai	நேர்பு நேர்பு நிரை	(பாம்பு போகு நெறி)
39. nēru nēru nēru	நேர்பு நேர்பு நேர்பு	(பாம்பு போகு காடு)
40. nēru nēru niraipu	நேர்பு நேர்பு நிரைபு	(பாம்பு போகு பொருப்பு)
41. nēru niraipu nēr	நேர்பு நிரைபு நேர்	(பாம்பு வழங்கு கான்)
42. nēru niraipu nirai	நேர்பு நிரைபு நிரை	(பாம்பு வழங்கு நெறி)
43. nēru niraipu nēru	நேர்பு நிரைபு நேர்பு	(பாம்பு வழங்கு காடு)
44. nēru niraipu niraipu	நேர்பு நிரைபு நிரைபு	(பாம்பு வழங்கு பொருப்பு)
45. niraipu nēr nēr	நிரைபு நேர் நேர்	(களிறு வாழ் கான்)

46. niraipu nēr nirai	நிரைபு நேர் நிரை	(களிறு வாழ் நெறி)
47. niraipu nēr nērpū	நிரைபு நேர் நேர்பு	(களிறு வாழ் காடு)
48. niraipu nēr niraipu	நிரைபு நேர் நிரைபு	(களிறு வாழ் பொருப்பு)
49. niraipu nirai nēr	நிரைபு நிரை நேர்	(களிறு வரு கான்)
50. niraipu nirai nirai	நிரைபு நிரை நிரை	(களிறு வரு நெறி)
51. niraipu nirai nērpū	நிரைபு நிரை நேர்பு	(களிறு வரு காடு)
52. niraipu nirai niraipu	நிரைபு நிரை நிரைபு	(களிறு வரு பொருப்பு)
53. niraipu nērpū nēr	நிரைபு நேர்பு நேர்	(களிறு போகு கான்)
54. niraipu nērpū nirai	நிரைபு நேர்பு நிரை	(களிறு போகு நெறி)
55. niraipu nērpū nērpū	நிரைபு நேர்பு நேர்பு	(களிறு போகு காடு)
56. niraipu nērpū niraipu	நிரைபு நேர்பு நிரைபு	(களிறு போகு பொருப்பு)
57. niraipu niraipu nēr	நிரைபு நிரைபு நேர்	(களிறு வழங்கு கான்)
58. niraipu niraipu nirai	நிரைபு நிரைபு நிரை	(களிறு வழங்கு நெறி)
59. niraipu niraipu nērpū	நிரைபு நிரைபு நேர்பு	(களிறு வழங்கு காடு)
60. niraipu niraipu niraipu	நிரைபு நிரைபு நிரைபு	(களிறு வழங்கு பொருப்பு)

In general, any two of the 64 **mū-v-acai-c-cīr** in a row would produce a line known as the **vañci aṭi**.<sup>28</sup> For example, வினைநவின்ற பேர்யானை (*matu:47*) is a **vañci** line, in which the feet are of the patterns **nirai-nirai-nēr** (வினை-நவின்-ற) and **nēr-nēr-nēr** (பேர்-யா-னை). Notice that they are **veñcīr**. Similarly, in தொடித்தோட்கை துடுப்பாக (*matu:34*) which is also a **vañci** line, the first foot is a **veñcīr** of the pattern **nirai-nēr-nēr** (தொடித்-தோட்-கை), whereas the second is a **veñcīr** of the pattern **nirai-nēr-nēr** (துடுப்-பா-க).

However, only the 60 **mū-v-acai-c-cīr** designated as the **vañci uriccīr** mentioned above are responsible for producing the meter called **vañci**. For example, விழுச்சூழிய விளங்கோடைய (*matu:43*) is a **vañci** line,

<sup>28</sup> Nacc:44, cey.45. The line obtains the name **cama-nilai-vañci aṭi**. The line with three such feet is called a **viya-nilai-vañci aṭi** (cf. Nacc:44, cey.47).

in which both feet are **vañci uriccīr** of the pattern **nirai-nēr-nirai**, and they combine to produce the **vañci** meter. Similarly, in the **vañci** line வினைமாட்சிய விரைபுரவியொடு (*puṛa.16:1*), the two feet with the patterns **nirai-nēr-nirai** (வினை -மாட் -சிய) and **nirai-nirai-niraipu** (விரை -புர-வியொடு ) produce the **vañci** meter.

Ten of the 60 **vañci uriccīr** are permissible in an **āciriya** **uriccīr** or **iyarccīr**.<sup>29</sup> They are **nēr-nēr-nirai**, **nirai-nēr-nirai**, **nēr-nēr-nērpū**, **nirai-nēr-nērpū**, **nēr-nēr-niraipu**, **nirai-nēr-nērpū**, **nērpū-nēr-nēr**, **nērpū-nirai-nēr**, **niraipu-nēr-nēr**, and **niraipu-nirai-nēr**. An example is நலம்பெறு கலிங்கத்துக் குறங்கின்மிசை அசைஇய தொருகை (*tiru:109*), in which குறங் -கின் -மிசை is of the pattern **nirai-nēr-nirai**.

### **aṭi** (line)

A line in a poem is known by the term **aṭi**. A standard line is defined as that which is composed of four metrical feet.<sup>30</sup>

### Types of Lines

The various types of lines recognized are **kuraḷ aṭi**, **cintaṭi**, **aḷavaṭi**, **neṭiḷ aṭi**, **kaḷi neṭiḷ aṭi**, **vañci aṭi**, **iyarccīr-veḷ-aṭi**, **corccīr aṭi**, and **muṭukiyaḷ aṭi**. Among them, the **kuraḷ aṭi**, **cintaṭi**, **aḷavaṭi**, **neṭiḷ aṭi**, **kaḷi neṭiḷ aṭi**, and **vañci aṭi** are named on the basis of the number of letters (**eḷuttu**) or feet (**cīr**) they contain. The others, **iyarccīr-veḷ-aṭi**, **corccīr aṭi**, and **muṭukiyaḷ aṭi**, obtain their names on the basis of the types of letters and feet they contain. These lines are discussed next.

<sup>29</sup> Nacc:34, cey.31; Pē:171-172, cey.343.

<sup>30</sup> Nacc:35, cey.32.

## Two Conventions of Grading an aṭi

Just like in the case of metrical feet (**cīr**), two different conventions provide different ways of considering an **aṭi**. One school views **aṭi** as containing so many letters (**eḷuttu**) while the other views it as composed of so many metrical feet. Vowelless consonants (**orru**), āytam (**ḥ**), and the extra-short **u** (**kurriyal ukaram**) are not taken into account when an **aṭi** is described in terms of the number of **eḷuttu** in it.<sup>31</sup> The **murriyal ukaram** is taken into account for naming an **aṭi** based on its letters.

When a line is construed in terms of the countable letters it contains, it is referred to as a **kaṭṭalai aṭi**, whereas the line which is graded in terms of the number of metrical feet it is made up of is called a **cīr vakai aṭi**.<sup>32</sup>

Both conventions have been understood as saying the same thing in different ways.<sup>33</sup> However, the convention which construes a line as composed of so many metrical feet seems to allow for more letters and feet per line. This is demonstrated later.

## Types of Lines (aṭi) in Terms of Letters (eḷuttu)

The convention which evaluates a line in terms of the letters, ordains that a standard line has four metrical feet. The line is a **kuraḷ aṭi** if it contains a minimum of four and a maximum of six letters (**eḷuttu**). If the

<sup>31</sup> Nacc:43, cey.44.

<sup>32</sup> One may note at this point that one of the later meters, the **kaṭṭalai-k-kali-t-turai**, echoes the term **kaṭṭalai**. In a poem composed in this meter, a line beginning with a **nēr acai** contains sixteen countable letters and a line beginning with a **nirai acai** contains seventeen countable letters. The verses in the text *Tirukkōvaiyār* are in this meter.

<sup>33</sup> Naccinārkkinīyar's commentary on cey.36-40.



line contains seven to nine **eḷuttu** it is a **cintaṭi**. If it contains ten to fourteen **eḷuttu** it is a **nēraṭi** or an **aḷavaṭi**. It is a **neṭil aṭi** if it contains fifteen to seventeen **eḷuttu**. And, it is a **kaḷi neṭil aṭi** if it contains eighteen to twenty **eḷuttu**. Examples provided by the commentators are reproduced here:

பேர்ந்து பேர்ந்து சார்ந்து சார்ந்து (pērntu pērntu cārntu cārntu)

This is a **kuraḷ aṭi** because it contains four **eḷuttu**: பே பே சா சா

நீர்வாய் கொண்டு நீண்ட நில (nīrvāy koṇṭu nīṇṭa nīla)

This is a **cintaṭi** because it contains seven **eḷuttu**: நீ வா கொ நீ ட நீ ல

நன்மணங் கமழும் பன்னெல் லூர (naṇmaṇaṅ kaṁaḷum paṇṇel lūra)

This is a **nēraṭi** because it contains ten **eḷuttu**: ந ம ண க ம மு ப னெ லூ ர

அணிநடை யசைஇய வரியமை சிலம்பின்

(aṇinaṭai yacaiya variyamai cilampin)

This is a **neṭil aṭi** because it contains fifteen **eḷuttu**:

அ ணி ந டை ய சை இ ய வ ரி ய மை சி ல பி

நளிமுழவு முழங்கிய வணிநிலவு தயங்குநக

(naḷimuḷavu muḷaṅkiya vaṇinilavu tayaṅkunaka)

This is a **kaḷi neṭil aṭi** because it contains eighteen **eḷuttu**:

ந ளி மு ழ வு மு ழ கி ய வ ணி நி ல வு த ய ந க

### Types of Lines (aṭi) in Terms of Metrical Feet (cīr)

By the other convention, a line made up of two metrical feet is called a **kuraḷ aṭi**; that with three feet is a **cintaṭi**; with four feet, an **aḷavaṭi**; with five feet, a **neṭil aṭi**. A line made up of more than five feet is a **kaḷi neṭil aṭi**. Examples:

ஒங்குதலை வியன்பரப்பின் ōṅkutaḷai viyaṇparappiṇ (*matu:1*)

This is a **kuraḷ aṭi** with two feet. But note that it has eight **eḷuttu**.

பந்த ரந்தரம் வேய்ந்து panta rantaram vēyntu (*pati.51:16*)

This is a **cintaṭi** with three feet. Note that it has only six **eḷuttu**.

துளங்குநீர் வியலகங் கலங்கக் கால்பொர

tuḷaṅkunīr viyalakaṅ kalaṅkak kālpora (*pati.51:1*)

This is an **aḷavaṭi** with four feet.

என்பொடு தடிபடு வழியெல்லா மெமக்கீயு மன்னே

eṇpoṭu taṭipaṭu vaḷiyellā memakkīyu manṇē (*pura.235:6*)

This is a **neṭil aṭi** with five feet.

நெறியறி செறிகுறி புரிதிரி பறியா வறிவன முந்துறீஇ

neriyaṛi ceṛikuṛi puritiri paṛiyā vaṛivaṇai muntuṛī (*kali.39:46*)

This is a **kali neṭil aṭi** with six feet. Note that it has twentythree **eḷuttu**.

#### Lines Which are Graded by the Number of Letters and Their Occurrence

The five types of lines, namely **kuraḷ aṭi**, **cintaṭi**, **nēraṭi**, **neṭilaṭi**, and **kali neṭilaṭi**, are proper for **ācīriyappā**.<sup>34</sup> In an **ācīriyappā**, even if any of these lines contains more or less than the number of letters it is supposed to have, it will not be discarded but will rather be recognized in terms of the number of metrical feet it is made up of.<sup>35</sup> Thus, in the final analysis, a line in an **ācīriyappā** could contain a minimum of four and a maximum of twenty letters.<sup>36</sup> An example is நெடுங்கொடிய நிமிந்தேரு நெஞ்சடைய புகன்மறவரும் (*pura.55:8*). This is a **kali neṭil aṭi** containing nineteen **eḷuttu**: நெ டு கொ டி ய நி மி த் தே ரு நெ ஞ டை ய புக ம ற வ ரு.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Nacc:53, cey.52; Pē:200, cey.364.

<sup>35</sup> Nacc:53, cey.53.

<sup>36</sup> Ḥam:441-442, cey.359.

<sup>37</sup> The line under consideration is followed by the refrain என 'thus' in the poem.

There is no restriction on the sequence of occurrence of these lines in an **āciriyaṭṭā**. They can occur in any order.<sup>38</sup> An example is *puṛaṇāṇūru* 187.

நாடா கொன்றே காடா கொன்றே *nāṭā koṇṇō kāṭā koṇṇō*

This is a **cintaṭi** with eight (**eḷuttu**).

அவலா கொன்றே மிசையா கொன்றே *avalā koṇṇō micaiyā koṇṇō*

This is a **nēraṭi** with ten **eḷuttu**.

எவ்வழி நல்லவ ராடவர் *evvaḷi nallava rāṭavar*

This is a **cintaṭi** with nine **eḷuttu**.

அவ்வழி நல்லை வாழிய நிலனே *avvaḷi nallai vāḷiya nilaṇē*

This is a **nēraṭi** with eleven **eḷuttu**.

A **kuraḷ aṭi** with six letters, **cintaṭi** (seven to nine letters), and an **aḷavaṭi** with a maximum of fourteen letters are permissible in a **vañcippā**.<sup>39</sup> For examples, see “**vañci aṭi**.”

The **cintaṭi** (seven to nine letters) and **aḷavaṭi** (ten to fourteen letters) occur in a **veṇṇpā** with some restrictions.<sup>40</sup> Occasionally, the **neṭil aṭi** (fifteen to seventeen letters) occurs in a **veṇṇpā**. But then, a **veṇṇcīr** ending with a **nēr acai** (**nēr-nēr-nēr** etc.) is followed by a **veṇṇcīr** or

<sup>38</sup> *Il*:443, *cey*.360.

<sup>39</sup> *Nacc*: 57, *cey*.57.

<sup>40</sup> An **iyarṇcīr** ending with a **nēr acai** (**nēr-nēr** or **nirai-nēr**) should not be followed by an **iyarṇcīr** beginning with a **nēr acai**; an **iyarṇcīr** ending with a **nirai acai** (**nēr-nirai** or **nirai-nirai**) should not be followed by an **iyarṇcīr** beginning with a **nirai acai** (*Ilam*:445, *cey*.364); a **veṇṇcīr** should not be followed by a **veṇṇcīr** beginning with a **nēr acai**. The first two situations would produce what is called an **āciriyaṭṭalai** and the last one would produce what is called the **veṇṇcīr veṇ ṭalai**. (*Nacc*:61-62, *cey*.58).

**iyarċir** beginning with a **nēr acai**.<sup>41</sup> There is no classical Tamil poem which is entirely in the **venpā** meter.

The longer types of **aḷavaṭi** (thirteen to fourteen letters), **neṭil aṭi** (fifteen to seventeen letters), and **kaḷi neṭil aṭi** (eighteen to twenty letters) are proper for a **kalippā**.<sup>42</sup>

### Refrain (**kūn**)

In some of the five types of lines discussed above, a single **acai** can occur as refrain and is denoted by the term **kūn** which literally means 'bending, curvature.' This type of refrain occurs in a **vañci** line, and can fall anywhere in the line. Examples: In **தோல் துவைத்தம்பில் துளைதோன்றுவ** (*pura.4:5*), the first item **தோல்** is a single **acai** and a **kūn**. The rest of the line is a **cintaṭi**. In *pura.345:1-4*, there is a **kūn** in each line, given here in bold type:

<sup>41</sup> *Īlam*:445-446, *cey*.364.

<sup>42</sup> *Īlam*:447, *cey*.365; *Nacc*:63, *cey*.59, 60; *Pē*:213, *cey*.371.

If a line falls short of or exceeds the number of letters it is supposed to contain, the line will be identified in terms of the number of metrical feet in it as a **ċir vakai aṭi**, not as a **kaṭṭalai aṭi** (*Nacc*:63, *cey*.59). For example, in **ஐயிரு தலையி னரக்கர் கோமான்** (*kali.38:3*), there are eleven **eḷuttu** and the line is an **aḷavaṭi** (ten to fourteen letters) by the earlier convention. Although it is not the longer type of **aḷavaṭi** (thirteen to fourteen letters) it is used in a **kalippā**, because it is acceptable as a **nēraṭi** (made up of four metrical feet) by the later convention. In **சுற்றமை வில்லர் சுரிவளர் பித்தையர்** (*kali.4:2*), there are twelve **eḷuttu** and therefore the line is an **aḷavaṭi** (ten to fourteen letters) by the earlier convention. Although it is not the longer type of **aḷavaṭi** (thirteen to fourteen letters) it is used in a **kalippā**, because it is a **nēraṭi** by the later convention. In **நெறியறி செறிகுறி புரிதிரி பறியா வறிவனை முந்தூறி** (*kali.39:46*), there are twentythree **eḷuttu** and the line contains more letters than are normally permitted in a **kaḷi neṭil aṭi** (eighteen to twenty letters) by the earlier convention. However, it is considered as a **kaḷi neṭil aṭi** (made up of

களிறண்ப்பக் கலங்கின காஅ  
 தேரோடத் துகள்கெழுமின தெருவு  
 மாமறுகலின் மயக்குற்றன வழி  
 கலங்கழாஅலிற் றுறை கலக்குற்றன

There are lines where an entire metrical foot (*cīr*) could occur as refrain and they are *nēraṭi* (ten to fourteen letters), which occur in an *āciriyaṭṭā*, *veṇṭā*, or *kalippā*. Occasionally they occur in a *vañcippā* also. In the following examples, the refrain in each case is given in bold type:

(*kuṟu.216:1-2*), *āciriyaṭṭā*:

அவரே கேடில் விழுப்பொருள் தருமார் பாசிலை  
 வாடா வள்ளியங் காடிற்றந்தோரே

(*cīru:50*), *āciriyaṭṭā*:

வருபுனல் வாயில் வஞ்சியும் வறிதே அதாஅன்று

(*puṛa.4:7-8*), *vañcippā*:

மாவே எறிபதத்தா னிடங்காட்டக்  
 கறும்பொருத செவ்வாயான்

(*kali.7:15-16*), *kalippā*:

இவட்கே அலங்கிதழ்க் கோடல் வீயுகு பவைபோ  
 விலங்கே ரெல்வளை யிறையு ரும்மே

---

more than five metrical feet) by the later convention.

### Lines Which are Graded by Metrical Feet and Their Occurrence

A line with three metrical feet often occurs as the penultimate line in an **āciriyaṇṇā**. It is not forbidden to occur in the middle.<sup>43</sup> These lines are given in bold type in the following examples:

*kuṟu.3:1-4*

நிலத்தினும் பெரிதே வானினு முயர்ந்தன்று  
நீரினும் ஆரள வின்றே சாரற்  
கருங்கோற் குறிஞ்சிப் பூக்கொண்டு  
பெருந்தே னிறைக்கு நாடனெடு நட்பே

*puṟa.235:7-10*

அம்பொடு வேல்நுழை வழியெல்லாந் தானிற்கு மன்னே  
நரந்த நாறுந் தன்கையாற்  
புலவுநாறு மென்தலை தைவரு மன்னே  
அருந்தலை யிரும்பாணர் அகன்மண்டைத் துளையுரிஇ

The line with three metrical feet, the last foot of which is made up of a single **acai** (**nēr**, **nirai**, **nēṟpu**, or **niraipu**), forms the last line in a **veṇṇā**. As pointed out elsewhere, there are no classical Tamil poems which are solely in the **veṇṇā** meter.

A line with three metrical feet can conclude a **kalippā**, but is also allowed elsewhere in a **kalippā**.<sup>44</sup> *kali.103:26*, is an example illustrating the occurrence of a line with three feet in the middle of the poem. The line is given in bold type.

<sup>43</sup> Nacc:70, cey.68, 69.

<sup>44</sup> Nacc:71, cey.70.

எரிதிகழ் கணிச்சியோன் குடிய பிறைக்கண்  
உருவ மாலை போலக்  
குருதிக் கோட்டொடு குடர்வ லந்தன

In the same poem, the penultimate line has only three feet:

மாசில்வான் முந்நீர்ப் பரந்த தொன்னிலம்  
ஆளுங் கிழமையொடு புணர்ந்த  
எங்கோ வாழியரிம் மலர்தலை யுலகே

The last line in *kalittokai* 18 has only three feet: சென்ற இளமை தரற்கு.

A line with five metrical feet (*aiñcīraṭi*) is permissible in an *ācīriyappā*, *venṇā*, and *kalippā*.<sup>45</sup> An example is நலம்பெறு கலங்கத்துக் குறங்கின்மிசை அசைஇய தொருகை (*tiru:109*) which is in *ācīriyappā*. In *kali.33:27*, which is in *kalippā*, there are five feet: புரிந்துநீ எள்ளுங் குயிலையும் அவரையும் புலவாதி.

A line with six metrical feet (*aṛuṇcīraṭi*) occurs in *ācīriyappā* and *kalippā*, and a line with four feet (*nēraṭi*) would normally precede it; the *aṛuṇcīraṭi* would produce *ācīriyattaḷai* as well as *venṇ taḷai*.<sup>46</sup> One commentator, *Ḥampūraṇar*, cites *puṛa.235:2*, as an example of an *aṛuṇcīraṭi* occurring in an *ācīriyappā*:

பெரியகட் பெறினே யாம்பாடத் தான்மகிழ்ந் துண்ணு மன்னே  
nirai-nirai nirai-nēr nēr-nēr-nēr nēr-nirai nēr-nēr nēr-nēr

Here, the metrical binding among the first three feet is *ācīriyattaḷai*. The binding among the third, fourth, and fifth feet is *venṇ taḷai*. The binding

<sup>45</sup> Nacc:65, cey.63.

<sup>46</sup> *Ḥam:449*, cey.370; Nacc:66, cey.64; *Pē:219*, cey.376.

between the last two feet is *ācīriyattaḷai*. This line is preceded in the poem by சிறியகட் பெறினே யெமக்கீயு மன்னே, which has four feet.

Now, consider *kali.39:44-46* which is a *kalippā*:

நெய்த லிதழுண்கண் தின்கண்ணு கென்கண்மன்  
எனவாங்கு  
நெறியறி செறிகுறி புரிதிரி பறியா அறிவனை முந்துறீஇ

Here, the last line has six feet. In this line, the metrical binding among the first four feet (நெறியறி செறிகுறி புரிதிரி பறியா) is *ācīriyattaḷai*. The binding among the last three feet (பறியா அறிவனை முந்துறீஇ) is *veṇ ṭaḷai*. This line is preceded by a line with four feet (நெய்த லிதழுண்கண் தின்கண்ணு கென்கண்மன்). The line which occurs as எனவாங்கு has to be treated separately. It is called an *aṭai-nilai-k-kiḷavi*, an utterance to be considered as a “paranthesis.” A discussion of *aṭai-nilai-k-kiḷavi* is included in the discussion of the structure of *kalippā* in this chapter.

### **vañci aṭi (vañci line)**

A line is called *vañci aṭi* when it has two or three metrical feet and the minimum number of letters for a foot is three and the maximum is six.<sup>47</sup> When there are three feet, one of them is referred to as refrain (*kūṇ*). This means that a *vañci* line can contain anywhere from six to twelve *eḷuttu*. This type of line is proper for a *vañcippā* and occurs occasionally in an *ācīriyappā*. For example, தூங்குகையான் ஓங்குநடைய (*pura.22:1*) is a *vañci* line. The number of *eḷuttu* in this line is seven: தூ கை யா ஓ ந டை ய. Similarly, புனல்வாயிற் பும்பொய்கைப் (*pati.13:8*) has

<sup>47</sup> Nacc:44, cey.45-47.



seven letters: பு ன வா யி பு பொ கை; ஒலிதெங்கி னிமிழ்முருதிற் (*pati.13:7*) has nine: ஒ லி தெ கி னி மி ம ரு தி. In பாடல்சான்ற விறல்வேந்தனும்மே (*pura.11:7*), there are ten *eḷuttu*: பா ட சா ற வி ற வே த னு மே; and, in நிலைக்கொராஅ இலக்கம்போன்றன (*pura.4:11*), there are eleven: நி லை கொ ரா அ இ ல க போ ற ன. In *patirruppattu 13*, which is basically an *ācīriyappā*, there are *vañci* lines: தொறுத்தவய லாரல்பிறநவும் (*pati.13:1*) has eleven *eḷuttu*: தொ று த வ ய லா ர பி ற ந வு; ஏறுபொருதசெறு வழாதுவித்துநவும் (*pati.13:2*) has twelve: ஏ பொ ரு த செ று வு ழா வி து ந வு; and களிறு கதவெறியாச் சிவந்துராஅய் (*pura.4:10*) also has twelve: க ளி க த வெ றி யா சி வ து ரா அ.

### **muṭukiyal aṭi** (“fast line”)

Lines with seven feet (*eḷucīraṭi*) are normally filled with short syllables, a process or feature known as **muṭuku-iyal**. This type of line is known as the **muṭukiyal aṭi**; it is proper for a *paripāṭal* and occurs also in a *kalippā*. A **muṭukiyal aṭi** produces a mixture of *ācīriyam* and *veṇṇpā* meters.<sup>48</sup>

Lines with four, five, or six feet also can be filled with short syllables. They do not occur in an *ācīriyappā* or a *veṇṇpā*, but do occur to produce *ācīriyam* and *veṇṇpā* meters within a *kalippā*.<sup>49</sup> For example, *kali.103:42-47*, is a section in the *veṇṇpā* meter. The line with four feet exhibiting **muṭukiyal** is given in bold type:

இரிபெழு பதிர்பதிர் பிகந்துடன் பலர்நீங்க  
வரிபரி பிறுபிறுபு குடர்சோரக் குத்தித்தன்

<sup>48</sup> *Iḷam*:448, *cey*.427; *Nacc*:68, 148, *cey*.66, 122.

<sup>49</sup> *Iḷam*:450, *cey*.373; *Nacc*:6, 8, *cey*.67; *Pē*:304, 434.

... ..

திரிதருங் கொல்களிறும் போன்ம்

In *kali.39:46-47*, lines with six and five feet occur producing **muṭukiyaḷ** in **ācīriyam** and **veṇṇā** meters.

நெறியறி செறிகுறி புரிதிரி பறியா அறிவனை முந்தறீஇ  
தகைமிகு தொகைவகை யறியுஞ் சான்றவ ரினமாக

### **iyarṇir vellāṭi**

A line is called an **iyarṇir vellāṭi** when an **iyarṇir** ending with a **nēr acai** (**nēr-nēr** or **nirai-nēr**) is followed by a metrical foot beginning with a **nirai acai**, or when an **iyarṇir** ending with a **nirai acai** (**nēr-nirai** or **nirai-nirai**) is followed by a foot beginning with a **nēr acai**.<sup>50</sup> It is called so because its feet which are **iyarṇir** produce a metrical binding called **veṇ taḷai**. An **iyarṇir vellāṭi** is permissible in an **ācīriyappā**, and there it is interspersed with a certain line (**ācīriya aṭi**) which produces a certain metrical binding (**ācīriya-t-taḷai**). Consider for example *kuru.12:1-3*.

எறும்பி யனையிற் குறும்பல் சுனைய  
nirai-nēr nirai-nēr nirai-nēr nirai-nēr

வுடைக்கல் லன்ன பாதற யேறிக்  
nirai-nēr nēr-nēr nēr-nēr nēr-nēr

கொடுவி லெயினர் பகழி மாய்க்கும்  
nirai-nēr nirai-nēr nirai-nēr nēr-nēr

The first line is an **iyarṇir vellāṭi** and the second is an **ācīriya aṭi** which produces **ācīriyattaḷai**.

<sup>50</sup> Nacc:64, cey.62.

### corcīr-aṭi

The **corcīr aṭi** is a line (**aṭi**) in which there is a word (**col**) which functions as a metrical foot (**cīr**). Any one of the following would be a **corcīr aṭi**: a line in which the feet are involved in a reckoning, as if in an exposition; a line in which there are less than four feet or where a foot has insufficient number of **acai**; a line in which a single **acai** (**nēr**, **nirai**, **nērupu**, or **niraipu**) stands alone as the line's first foot as refrain without being joined with the following foot and the lone **acai** is called an **olīyacai**; or a line in which a foot stands alone at the end but is combined with the next line to make sense, and the lone foot gets the name **valīyacai**.<sup>51</sup> This type of line, **corcīr aṭi**, is proper to a **paripāṭal**.<sup>52</sup>

In *pari.3:4-9*, the reckoning type of **corcīr** lines are found:

தீவளி விசம்பு நிலனி ரைந்து

‘the Five, namely, fire, wind, sky, earth, and water’

ஞாயிறுந் திங்களு மறனு மைவரும்

‘the sun, moon, Aṇṇ, and the Five’

திதியின் சிறரும் விதியின் மக்களும்

‘the children of Titi and the children of Viti’

மாசி லெண்மரும் பதினொரு கபிலரும்

‘the blemishless Eight and the eleven Kapilars’

தாமா விருவருந் தருமனு மடங்கலும்

‘the Two, Tarumaṇ and the Lion’

<sup>51</sup> Iḷam:488, cey.428; Nacc:148, cey.123; Pē:304, cey.434.

<sup>52</sup> Iḷam.487, 427. They are also found elsewhere: e.g., *pati.24:6-7*.

மூவே முலகமு முலகினுண் மன்பதும்  
 ‘the twentyone worlds and the lives in these worlds’

In *pari.2:65-68*, each line has less than four feet whereas the lines preceding and following them have four feet each:

திகமொளி யொண்கடர் வளப்பாடு கொளலும் (four feet)  
 தின்னூரு புடனுண்டி (two feet)  
 பிற ருடம் படுவாரா (three feet)  
 தின்னெடு புரைய (two feet)  
 அந்தணர் கானும் வரவு (three feet)  
 வாயடை யமிந்ததின் மனத்தகத் தடைத்தர (four feet)

In *pari.4:25-32*, the first **acai** தின் makes the lines qualify as a **corcīraṭi**, and is called **oliyacai**. Note that this type of single **acai** also receives the name **kūn**.

தின் வெம்மையும் விளக்கமு ஞாயிற்றுள  
 தின் தண்மையும் சாயலும் திங்களுள  
 தின் சுரத்தலும் வண்மையு மாரியுள  
 ... ..  
 தின் வருதலு மொடுக்கமு மருத்தினுள

In *pari.12:99*, the last **acai** ஆங்க ‘thus’ is a **valiyacai** and makes the line a **corcīraṭi**<sup>53</sup>:

---

<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately, the traditional commentator’s cryptic usage of the term “**acai**” in this context, misleads one to underestimate the function of the word **āṇka**. See Parimēlaḷakar’s commentary on *pari.12:99*.

விசம்புகடி விட்டன்று விழவுப்புன லாங்க  
இன்பமுங் கவினு மழுங்கன் முதூர்

In *pari.19:50*, the last **acai** இவன் '(this) he' makes the line a **corcīraṭi** because it combines with the next line to make sense and becomes a **valiyacai**:

இந்திரன் பூசை யிவளக லிகையிவன்  
சென்ற கவுதமன் சினனுறக் கல்லுரு

In *kali.33:16-19*, each line has a **valiyacai** at the end. Note that each of these **valiyacai** is composed of more than one **acai**. They are given in bold type:

நொந்து நகுவனபோல் நந்தின கொம்பு தைந்துள்ளி  
யுகுவது போலுமென் நெஞ்சு எள்ளித்  
தொகுபுடன் ஆடுவ போலுமயில் கையில்  
உகுவன போலும் வளை என்கண்போல்  
இகுபறல் வாரும் பருவத்தும் வாரார்

### The Convention of Grading a Line by the Number of Metrical Feet

The convention which grades a line by the number of metrical feet it is composed of, allows for more letters per line, which technique, in turn, produces longer lines in poetry. Consider *matu:1*, which is segmented as containing two feet and so is a **kuraḷ aṭi** by this convention: ஓங்குதலை வியன்பரப்பின் . If the number of **eluttu** in it are counted, the number would turn out to be eight: ஓ த லை வி ய ப ர பி . The number eight exceeds the number of maximum **eluttu** allowed in a **kuraḷ aṭi** by the convention which describes a line in terms of the number of **eluttu**. Note that there is no better way to segment this line, except to have it as consisting of two

metrical feet. Similarly, consider *kali.39:46*, which is segmented as composed of six metrical feet and so is a **kaḷi neṭil aṭi**: நெறியறி செறிகுறி புரிதிரி பறியா வறிவனை முந்துநீஇ. If the number of **eḷuttu** in this line are counted, it would turn out to be twentythree: நெ றி ய றி செ றி கு றி பு ரி தி ரி ப றி யா வ றி வ னை மு து நீ இ. The number twentythree exceeds the number of maximum **eḷuttu** allowed in a **kaḷi neṭil aṭi** by the convention which describes a line in terms of the number of **eḷuttu**. This leads one to ascertain that the two conventions are different, one more rigid and the other more relaxed which eventually encouraged later poets to compose elaborate poems containing numerous number of metrical feet per line.<sup>54</sup>

### Metrical Binding (**taḷai**)

The way in which two adjacent metrical feet in a line hang together is crucial in a Tamil poem. The last **acai** of a metrical foot and the first **acai** of the following metrical foot are supposed to form a metrical binding which ultimately produces what is equivalent to rhythm. The tradition has a name for such binding which is **taḷai** ‘to bind; binding.’ Normally, attention is paid only to the metrical bindings that exist between adjacent feet within a line, while the binding between the last foot in a line and the first foot in the next line is not discussed.

### Earlier Convention

The earlier convention seems to be more focused on individual feet and not to be overly concerned with classifying the various ways of

---

<sup>54</sup> One can refer to the *ācīriya viruttam* verses in Kampan’s *Irāmāvatāram* (“kam-parāmāyaṇam”) and later works of the *Pillāittamiḷ* genre with longer lines in each *viruttam*.

binding two adjacent metrical feet. However, two major types of binding, **ācīriya-t-taḷai** and **veṇ-taḷai**, are recognized by this convention.<sup>55</sup> A third one, **kali-t-taḷai**, also is mentioned, but not as major. Unlike the later convention, the earlier one does not discuss **vañci-t-taḷai**.

The **ācīriyattaḷai** is obtained under two circumstances: when an **iyarcīr** ending with a **nēr** or a **nērupu** is followed by a metrical foot beginning with a **nēr** or a **nērupu**; or when an **iyarcīr** ending with a **nirai** or a **niraipu** is followed by a metrical foot beginning with a **nirai** or a **niraipu** respectively. Commentators note that the first one is known as **nēr onru ācīriya-t-taḷai** and the second, **nirai onru ācīriya-t-taḷai**.

The **veṇ-taḷai** is also obtained under two circumstances. One of them is a contrast to the **ācīriyattaḷai**: if an **iyarcīr** ending with a **nēr** is followed by a metrical foot beginning with a **nirai** or if an **iyarcīr** ending with a **nirai** is followed by a metrical foot beginning with a **nēr**. The metrical binding then is called **iyarcīr veṇ taḷai**. The second type of **veṇ taḷai** is obtained when a **veṇcīr** is followed by a metrical foot beginning with a **veṇcīr** or an **iyarcīr** beginning with a **nēr**. The binding between the two feet is then called **veṇ cīr veṇ taḷai**.<sup>56</sup>

A metrical binding contrasting both **ācīriyattaḷai** and **veṇ taḷai** is the **kalittaḷai**. As a contrast to the **veṇ taḷai**, it is obtained in the following way: when a **veṇcīr** is followed by a metrical foot beginning with a **veṇcīr** that starts with a **nirai**. As a contrast to the **ācīriyattaḷai**, it is obtained when an **ācīriya uriccīr** ending with a **nirai** is followed by a **veṇcīr** beginning with a **nirai**.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Nacc:55-56, 65, cey.56, 63.

<sup>56</sup> Iḷam:445, cey.364; Nacc:61, cey.58.

<sup>57</sup> Nacc:63, cey.60; Pē:214, cey.372.

pattern of the first cīr	following cīr	name of the taḷai
nēr-nēr	nēr-nēr	nēr onru āciriya t taḷai
nirai-nēr	nēr-nirai	nēr onru āciriya t taḷai
nērpū-nēr	nērpū-nēr	nēr onru āciriya t taḷai
niraipu-nēr	nērpū-nēr	nēr onru āciriya t taḷai
nēr-nērpū	nēr-nēr	nēr onru āciriya t taḷai
nirai-nērpū	nēr-nēr	nēr onru āciriya t taḷai

(In making this taḷai, the first foot can have only these six patterns, whereas the following foot can have any pattern with the only condition that its first acai should be nēr or nērpū.)

nēr-nirai	niraipu-nēr	nirai onru āciriya t taḷai
nirai-nirai	niraipu-nēr	nirai onru āciriya t taḷai
nēr-niraipu	nirai-nēr	nirai onru āciriya t taḷai
nirai-niraipu	nirai-nēr	nirai onru āciriya t taḷai

(In making this taḷai, the first foot can have only these four patterns, whereas the following foot can have any pattern with the only condition that its first acai should be nirai or niraipu.)

nēr-nēr	nirai-nēr	iyarçīr veṇ taḷai
nirai-nēr	nirai-nēr	iyarçīr veṇ taḷai
nēr-nirai	nēr-nēr	iyarçīr veṇ taḷai
nirai-nirai	nēr-nēr	iyarçīr veṇ taḷai

(In making this taḷai, the first foot can have only these four patterns, whereas the following foot can have any pattern with the only condition that its first acai should not be the same as the last acai of the first foot.)

nēr-nēr-nēr	nēr-nēr	veṇçīr veṇ taḷai
nirai-nēr-nēr	nēr-nērpū	veṇçīr veṇ taḷai



nirai-nirai-nēr	nēr-nirai	veṇṇīr veṇ taḷai
nēr-nirai-nēr	nēr-niraipu	veṇṇīr veṇ taḷai
nēr-nēr-nēr	nēr-nēr-nēr	veṇṇīr veṇ taḷai
nirai-nēr-nēr	nēr-nēr-nirai	veṇṇīr veṇ taḷai
nirai-nirai-nēr	nēr-nirai-nēr	veṇṇīr veṇ taḷai
nēr-nirai-nēr	nēr-nirai-nēr	veṇṇīr veṇ taḷai

(In making this **taḷai**, the first foot can have only these four patterns, whereas the following foot can be composed of two or three **acai** with the only condition that its first **acai** should be **nēr** like the last **acai** of the first foot.)

nēr-nēr-nēr	nirai-nēr-nēr	kalittaḷai
nirai-nēr-nēr	nirai-nēr-nirai	kalittaḷai
nirai-nirai-nēr	nirai-nirai-nēr	kalittaḷai
nēr-nirai-nēr	nirai-nirai-nēr	kalittaḷai
nēr-nirai	nirai-nēr-nēr	kalittaḷai
nirai-nirai	nirai-nēr-nēr	kalittaḷai
nērupu-nirai	nirai-nēr-nēr	kalittaḷai
niraipu-nirai	nirai-nēr-nēr	kalittaḷai

(In making this **taḷai**, the first foot can have only these eight patterns, whereas the following foot can have any pattern with two conditions: that its first **acai** should always be **nirai**; and that when the first foot has only two **acai** ending with **nirai**, the following foot should be a **veṇṇīr** beginning with **nirai**.)

The above discussed convention undergoes a change in post-classical period.

## Later Convention

In a later convention, which is not very different from the earlier one, seven types of **taḷai** are distinctly recognized: **nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai**, **nirai onru āciriya-t-taḷai**, **iyar̥cīr veṇ-taḷai**, **veṇcīr veṇ-taḷai**, **kalittaḷai**, **onriya vañci-t-taḷai**, and **onrā vañci-t-taḷai**. Note that here two types of **vañci-t-taḷai** are distinguished. Also, in considering the **taḷai**, the type of the first **cīr** (whether an **iyar̥cīr**, **āciriya uriccīr**, **veṇcīr**, or **vañciccīr**) seems to be most important whereas the type of the following **cīr** is not as crucial as its first **acai** (Yāpparunkalakkārikai:10).

pattern of the first cīr	following cīr	name of the taḷai
<b>nēr-nēr</b>	<b>nēr-nēr</b>	<b>nēr onru āciriya t taḷai</b>
<b>nirai-nēr</b>	<b>nēr-nēr</b>	<b>nēr onru āciriya t taḷai</b>

(In making this **taḷai**, the first foot can have only these two patterns, whereas the following foot can have any pattern with the only condition that its first **acai** should be **nēr**.)

<b>nēr-nirai</b>	<b>nirai-nēr</b>	<b>nirai onru āciriya t taḷai</b>
<b>nirai-nirai</b>	<b>nirai-nēr</b>	<b>nirai onru āciriya t taḷai</b>

(In making this **taḷai**, the first foot can have only these two patterns, whereas the following foot can have any pattern with the only condition that its first **acai** should be **nirai**.)

<b>nēr-nēr</b>	<b>nirai-nēr</b>	<b>iyar̥cīr veṇ taḷai</b>
<b>nirai-nēr</b>	<b>nirai-nēr</b>	<b>iyar̥cīr veṇ taḷai</b>
<b>nēr-nirai</b>	<b>nēr-nēr</b>	<b>iyar̥cīr veṇ taḷai</b>
<b>nirai-nirai</b>	<b>nēr-nēr</b>	<b>iyar̥cīr veṇ taḷai</b>

(In making this **taḷai**, the first foot can have only these four patterns, whereas the following foot can have any pattern with the only condition that its first **acai** should not be similar to the last **acai** of the first foot.)

<b>nēr-nēr-nēr</b>	<b>nēr-nēr-nēr</b>	<b>veṇṇīr veṇ taḷai</b>
<b>nirai-nēr-nēr</b>	<b>nēr-nēr-nirai</b>	<b>veṇṇīr veṇ taḷai</b>
<b>nirai-nirai-nēr</b>	<b>nēr-nirai-nēr</b>	<b>veṇṇīr veṇ taḷai</b>
<b>nēr-nirai-nēr</b>	<b>nēr-nirai-nēr</b>	<b>veṇṇīr veṇ taḷai</b>

(In making this **taḷai**, the first foot can have only these four patterns, whereas the following foot can have any pattern with the only condition that its first **acai** should be **nēr** like the last **acai** of the first foot.)

<b>nēr-nēr-nēr</b>	<b>nirai-nēr-nēr</b>	<b>kalittaḷai</b>
<b>nirai-nēr-nēr</b>	<b>nirai-nēr-nirai</b>	<b>kalittaḷai</b>
<b>nirai-nirai-nēr</b>	<b>nirai-nirai-nēr</b>	<b>kalittaḷai</b>
<b>nēr-nirai-nēr</b>	<b>nirai-nirai-nēr</b>	<b>kalittaḷai</b>

(In making this **taḷai**, the first foot can have only these four patterns, whereas the following **cīr** can have any pattern with two conditions: that its first **acai** should always be **nirai**; and that when the first **cīr** has only two **acai**, the following foot should be a **veṇṇīr**.)

<b>nēr-nēr-nirai</b>	<b>nirai-nēr-nēr</b>	<b>onṇiya vañci t taḷai</b>
<b>nirai-nēr-nirai</b>	<b>nirai-nēr-nirai</b>	<b>onṇiya vañci t taḷai</b>
<b>nirai-nirai-nirai</b>	<b>nirai-nirai-nēr</b>	<b>onṇiya vañci t taḷai</b>
<b>nēr-nirai-nirai</b>	<b>nirai-nirai-nēr</b>	<b>onṇiya vañci t taḷai</b>
<b>nēr-nēr-nirai</b>	<b>nēr-nēr-nēr</b>	<b>onṇā vañci t taḷai</b>
<b>nirai-nēr-nirai</b>	<b>nēr-nēr-nirai</b>	<b>onṇā vañci t taḷai</b>
<b>nirai-nirai-nirai</b>	<b>nēr-nirai-nēr</b>	<b>onṇā vañci t taḷai</b>
<b>nēr-nirai-nirai</b>	<b>nēr-nirai-nēr</b>	<b>onṇā vañci t taḷai</b>

(In making the **vañcittaḷai**, the first foot can have any of the 60 patterns designated earlier as the **vañci uriccīr**, and the following foot can also have any of those patterns.)

### Metrical Bindings (**taḷai**), Meters (**pā**), and Lines (**aṭi**)

In general, the **āciriyaṭṭaḷai** and **iyarṇīr veṇ taḷai** are proper to an **āciriyaṭṭā**. The **iyarṇīr veṇ taḷai** and **veṇ cīr veṇ taḷai** are proper to a **veṇṭpā**. The **veṇ cīr veṇ taḷai** and the **āciriya-t-taḷai** are proper to a **kalippā**. The **vañcittaḷai** infrequently occurs in a **kalippā**.<sup>58</sup> There are some restrictions with regard to the metrical bindings within a line.

When the metrical binding is brought about by the various **āciriya uriccīr**, four of the latter do not occur in a row, because such a sequence would result in a sound (**ōcai**) called **tūṅkal ōcai** ‘suspended sound.’ Therefore, the **āciriya uriccīr** have to be separated by an **iyarṇīr** to produce the proper **āciriyaṭṭā** meter.<sup>59</sup> The sound obtained would be quite pleasant even if two **nērpū** or **niraipu** occur in a line. The best situation would be to have an **āciriya uriccīr** ending with a **nirai** (**nērpū-nirai** or **niraipu-nirai**) in the beginning of the line and have it followed by an **iyarṇīr**.<sup>60</sup> Examples:

ஓங்குமலைப் பெருவிற் பாம்புஞாண் கொளிஇ (*pura.55:1*)  
**nērpū-nirai nirai-nēr nērpū-nēr nirai-nēr**

உவவுமதி யருவின் ஓங்கல் வெண்குடை (*pura.3:1*)  
**niraipu-nirai nirai-nēr nēr-nēr nēr-nirai**

<sup>58</sup> *Iḷam*:445, 447-448, *cey*.364, 366-368.

<sup>59</sup> *Nacc*:54, *cey*.54.

<sup>60</sup> *Nacc*:54, *cey*.54; *Pē*:203, *cey*.366.

The **ācīriyattaḷai** and the **veṇ cīr veṇ taḷai**, which is obtained when a **veṇcīr** is followed by a **veṇcīr** beginning with a **nēr acai**, do not occur in a **cintaṭi** (seven to nine letters) or **aḷavaṭi** (ten to fourteen letters) in a **veṇpā**. The **veṇ cīr veṇ taḷai** specified here would produce what is called the **ceppal ōcai** ‘replying sound’ as well as the **tullal ōcai** ‘jumping sound’, and therefore does not occur in these specific lines.<sup>61</sup> When this type of **veṇ cīr veṇ taḷai** does occur in a **veṇpā**, the line becomes a **neṭil aṭi** (fifteen to seventeen letters) and is to be construed in terms of the number of metrical feet in it, not by the number of letters.<sup>62</sup>

The **iyarcīr veṇ taḷai** is permissible in an **ācīriyappā** and the best situation would be to separate the line producing the **iyarcīr veṇ taḷai** with a line whose metrical feet give rise to **ācīriyattaḷai**.<sup>63</sup> An example is *kuru.12:1-3*.

எறும்பி யனையிற் குறும்பல் சுனைய  
nirai-nēr nirai-nēr nirai-nēr nirai-nēr  
வுடைக்கல் லன்ன பாதற யேறிக்  
nirai-nēr nēr-nēr nēr-nēr nēr-nēr  
கொடுவி லெயினர் பகழி மாய்க்கும்  
nirai-nēr nirai-nēr nirai-nēr nēr-nēr

The first line is an **iyarcīr vellāṭi** which produces the **iyarcīr veṇ taḷai** and the second is an **ācīriya aṭi** which produces an **ācīriyattaḷai**.

The last metrical foot in a **veṇpā** always produces the **iyarcīr veṇ taḷai** or **veṇ cīr veṇ taḷai** when bound with its preceding foot. When a

<sup>61</sup> Nacc:61, cey.58.

<sup>62</sup> Iḷam:445-446, cey.364; Nacc:62, cey.58.

<sup>63</sup> Nacc:64, cey.62.

**nirai acai** or a **niraipu acai** occurs as the **veṇṇpā**'s last foot, it is preceded by an **iyarṇcīr** ending with a **nēr** (**nēr-nēr** or **nirai-nēr**). Thereupon, it would bind with the preceding foot like a **nirai**. Similarly, when a **nēr acai** or a **nērpu acai** occurs as the **veṇṇpā**'s last foot, it would be preceded by an **iyarṇcīr** ending with a **nirai** (**nēr-nirai** or **nirai-nirai**). Then it binds with the preceding metrical foot like a **nēr**. When the penultimate foot in a **veṇṇpā** is a **veṇṇcīr** and so has three **acai** (**nēr-nēr-nēr** etc.), the last foot would be a **nēr acai** or a **nērpu acai**, not a **nirai** or a **niraipu**. The last foot then binds with the penultimate foot like a **nēr acai**.<sup>64</sup>

The **kalittaḷai** obtained by binding an **iyarṇcīr** or an **āciriya uriccīr** ending with a **nirai** (**nēr-nirai**, **nirai-nirai**, **nērpu-nirai**, or **niraipu-nirai**) with the following **veṇṇcīr** beginning with a **nirai** (**nirai-nēr-nēr** or **nirai-nirai-nēr**) occurs in a **kalippā**, and the lines become longer types of **aḷavaṭi** (thirteen to fourteen letters), **neṭil aṭi** (fifteen to seventeen letters), or a **kali neṭil aṭi** (eighteen to twenty letters).<sup>65</sup> For example, *kali.39:1* is an **aḷavaṭi** with thirteen letters:

காமர் கடும்புனல் கலந்தெம்மோ டாடுவாள்  
nēr-nēr nirai-nirai nirai-nēr-nēr nēr-nirai

<sup>64</sup> Nacc:75-76, cey.74, 75.

<sup>65</sup> Nacc:63, cey.59-60.

Similarly, *kali.120:4* is a **neṭil aṭi** with sixteen letters:

உரவுத்தகை மழுங்கித்தன் இடும்பையா லொருவனை  
**niraipu-nirai nirai-nēr-nēr nirai-nēr-nēr nirai-nirai**

If an **iyarcīr** or an **āciriya uriccīr** ending with a **nirai** (**nēr-nirai**, **nirai-nirai**, **nērpū-nirai**, or **niraipu-nirai**) is followed by an **iyarcīr** beginning with a **nirai** (**nirai-nēr** or **nirai-nirai**) or a **veṇcīr** beginning with a **nēr** (**nēr-nēr-nēr** or **nēr-nirai-nēr**), the resulting **taḷai** is not **kalittaḷai**, but an **āciriyaṭṭaḷai** or **veṇ taḷai** and the resulting sound is not **tullaḷ** 'jumping.'<sup>66</sup> However, such a line would occur in a **kalippā** and would be construed in terms of the number of metrical feet in it.<sup>67</sup> An example is *kali.25:1*, which would be a **neṭilaṭi** if the letters are taken into account, but is an **aḷavaṭi**, since it is construed in terms of the feet. In this line, the binding between the second and third feet is **nirai onru āciriya-t-taḷai**.

வயக்குறு மண்டிலம் வடமொழிப் பெயர்பெற்ற  
**nirai-nirai nēr-nirai nirai-nirai nirai-nēr-nēr**

When an **iyarcīr** ending with a **nirai** (**nēr-nirai** or **nirai-nirai**) and a **veṇcīr** beginning with a **nēr** or **nirai** occur as the first two feet in a line, and are followed by a stack of **veṇcīr** providing **veṇ cīr veṇ taḷai**, some **tullaḷ ocai** 'jumping sound' is produced.<sup>68</sup> The line then is construed in terms of its metrical feet., and has more than one type of **taḷai**.<sup>69</sup> An example is *kali.35:1*.

<sup>66</sup> Nacc:63, cey.60.

<sup>67</sup> Nacc:63-64, cey.60-61.

<sup>68</sup> Nacc:63, cey.60.

<sup>69</sup> Iḷam:447, cey.367; Nacc:64, cey.61; Pē:215, cey.373.

மடியிலான் செல்வம்போல் மரன்நந்த அச்செல்வம்  
nirai-nirai nēr-nēr-nēr nirai-nēr-nēr nēr-nēr-nēr

Here, the metrical binding between the first two feet is **iyarcīr veṇ taḷai**. That between the second and third feet is **kalittaḷai**, and the one between the third and fourth feet is **veṇ cīr veṇ taḷai**. As a corollary, in a **kali** line that is construed in terms of metrical feet, rather than in terms of letters, several **taḷai** would occur. An example is *kali.25:1*, which would be a **neṭil aṭi** containing fifteen letters or an **aḷavaṭi** composed of four feet:

வயக்குறு மண்டிலம் வடமொழிப் பெயர்பெற்ற  
nirai-nirai nēr-nirai nirai-nirai nirai-nēr-nēr

Here, the binding between the first two feet is **iyarcīr veṇ-taḷai**. That between the second and third feet is an **ācīriyattaḷai**. The one between the third and fourth feet is also an **ācīriyattaḷai**.

A mixture of **ācīriyattaḷai** and **veṇ taḷai** happens in a line with five feet (**aiñcīraṭi**) in **ācīriyappā**, **veṇpā**, and **kalippā**.<sup>70</sup> An example is *pura.235:7*, which is a line with five feet and in which there is a mixture of **ācīriyattaḷai** and **veṇ taḷai**:

அம்பொடு வேனுழை வழியெல்லாந் தானிற்கு மன்னே  
nēr-nēru nēr-nirai nirai-nēr-nēr nēr-nēr-nēr nēr-nēr

Here, the first two metrical bindings are **ācīriyattaḷai**, whereas the third and the last are **veṇ taḷai**.

<sup>70</sup> Iḷam:448, cey.369; Nacc:65, cey.63.



The predominant **taḷai** is **ācīriyattaḷai**, when a line with six feet (**arucīraṭi**) occurs in an **ācīriyappā**, and the line is preceded by a line with four feet (**nēraṭi**).<sup>71</sup> An example is *pura.235:2*.

பெரியகட் பெறினே யாம்பாடத் தான்மகிழ்ந் துண்ணு மன்னே  
nirai-nirai nirai-nēr nēr-nēr-nēr nēr-nirai nēr-nēr nēr-nēr

Here, the metrical binding among the first three feet is **ācīriyattaḷai**. The binding among the third, fourth, and fifth feet is **veṇ taḷai**. The binding between the last two feet is **ācīriyattaḷai**. This line is preceded in the poem by சிறியகட் பெறினே யெமக்கீயு மன்னே, which has four feet.

When there is **ācīriyattaḷai** and/or **veṇ taḷai**, a line with six feet (**arucīraṭi**) occurs in a **kalippā** and is preceded by a line with four feet (**nēraṭi**).<sup>72</sup> In *kali.39:46*, which is a line with six feet, **ācīriyattaḷai** is produced between the first four feet while **veṇ taḷai** is produced between the last three feet:

நெறியறி செறிகுறி புரிதிரி பறியா அறிவனை முந்தறிஇ  
nirai-nirai nirai-nirai nirai-nirai nirai-nēr nirai-nirai nēr-nirai-nēr

---

<sup>71</sup> *Ḥam:449, cey.370.*

<sup>72</sup> *Nacc:66-67, cey.64; Pē:219, cey.376.*

**pā** (meter, poem)

The term **pā** refers to meter per se and only by metonymy refers to a poem. Traditional commentators refer to **pā** as a limb (**uṟuppu**) of a composition (**ceyyu**) and define it as the continuation of **tūkku**, which refers to the duration of a cycle of rhythmic beats. Thus, **pā** as meter, is basically the continuation of the cycle of beats. Since **pā** is a component of a composition, its variety is recognized through various compositions. Four basic types of meter have been recognized in the tradition: **ācīriyam**, **vañci**, **veṇṇpā**, and **kali**.<sup>73</sup> Each **pā** is supposed to produce a characteristic sound which is termed **ōcai**. These different sounds are discussed later in this chapter under “**tūkku**.”

**pā** as “meter”

The meter **ācīriyam** is an elaborate one, with a sweet/pleasant sound and is employed in numerous lines which contain anywhere from four to twenty **eḷuttu** per line. The meter **vañci** has been recognized as the one with the behavior (**naṭai**) of the **ācīriyam**, and that which ends like an **ācīriyam**. The meter **veṇṇpā** is not like these two (**ācīriyam** and **vañci**) and has a different sound, **ceppal ōcai** ‘replying sound, stately sound.’ The meter **kali** has been identified as employing many **veṇṇīr** and, in fact, as a limb of the **veṇṇpā** meter.<sup>74</sup> All the variations of these meters are subsumed under two major types, namely **ācīriyam** and **veṇṇpā**.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Nacc:131, cey. 105.

<sup>74</sup> Iḷam:473, cey.413.

<sup>75</sup> Nacc:132-133, cey.107-108.

An interesting analogy of these meters to people is also made in the tradition.<sup>76</sup> It is based on the social structure that was prevalent at the time of the traditional commentators. Kings, brahmins, merchants, and farmers are the four types of people drawn into this comparison.

The meter known as the **veṇṇpā** has the quality of the brahmins (**antaṇar nīrmai**) because it does not allow metrical bindings (**taḷai**) other than its own, which is **veṇ taḷai**, and does not occur in lines which vary too much in length. That is, the meter **veṇṇpā** is obtained purely by employing metrical feet which give rise to the binding known as the **veṇ taḷai** and the lines employing this meter do not permit any other meter nor vary much in length. The meter known as the **ācīriyam** has been recognized as having a stately nature (**araca-t-taṇmai**). It is similar to **veṇṇpā** but allows other metrical bindings besides its own, which is **ācīriyattaḷai**. Furthermore, it has a sweet sound and occurs elaborately. That is, a line employing **ācīriyattaḷai** may permit other types of metrical binding in it and the meter prevails in a long poem. The meter known as the **kali** has the quality of the merchants (**vaṇikar nīrmai**). It is similar to the **ācīriyam** and allows a few other metrical bindings besides its own, which is **kalittaḷai**. The **vañci** meter has the behavioral pattern of the farmers (**vēḷāṇ māntar iyalpīrru**) because it occurs not in the standard **aḷavaṭi** (ten to fourteen letters), but in shorter lines like a **kuṛaḷaṭi** (four to six letters) or a **cintaṭi** (seven to nine letters), and permits many types of metrical binding.

The **ācīriyam** is the most widely used meter in classical Tamil poetry. The shortest poem entirely in the **ācīriyam** meter has three lines (e.g., *aīṅkuṛunūru* 121), while the longest has 782 lines (*maturaikkāñci*) and employs the **vañci** meter interspersed with the **ācīriyam**. With less frequency than the **ācīriyam**, **vañci** is a meter used predominantly in a

---

<sup>76</sup> ḷam:472-473, cey.410.

few poems that end in the **ācīriyam** meter. Other meters, **veṇṇpā** and **kali**, do not prevail in an entire composition in classical Tamil poetry.

The **veṇṇpā** meter is used in songs (**pāṭṭu**) which are **neṭu veṇṇ pāṭṭu** 'long song in **veṇṇpā** meter', **kuṟu veṇṇ pāṭṭu** 'short song in **veṇṇpā** meter', **kaikkīlai** "one-sided love," and **paripāṭṭu** 'song that is quite accomodative' and in satirical compositions (**aṅkata-c-ceyyuḷ**). In classical Tamil poetry, the **kuṟuveṇṇ pāṭṭu** and **neṭuveṇṇ pāṭṭu** occur as parts of the poems which employ the **kali** meter (e.g., *kali.106:11-14, 20-22, 23-25, 26-29, 31-33*). Poems employing the themes of unrequited love (**kaikkīlai**) and satire (**aṅkatam**) are in the **ācīriyam** meter (e.g., *puṛaṇāṇūru* 83-85, 204). The anthology called *Paripāṭal* contains **paripāṭṭu** in which there is a mixture of all four meters, **ācīriyam**, **vañci**, **veṇṇpā**, and **kali** (e.g., *pari.3:1-2; 5:19-21; 20:110-111; 1:60*).

A mixture of the **veṇṇpā** and **ācīriyam** meters is permissible in a poem that expresses unrequited love (**kaikkīlai**). Actually, this mixture is known as **maruṭpā** which begins in the **veṇṇpā** meter and ends in the **ācīriyam** meter. Classical Tamil poetry does not have an example.

**pā** as "poem"

Except for some which are entirely in the **ācīriyam** meter, all classical Tamil poems employ more than one meter in their lines. It must be noted that an entire composition (**pā** or **pāṭṭu**) may be in just one meter (**pā**) or may contain sections which are in different meters. For example, *kuṟuntokai* 122 is in the **ācīriyam** meter; *puṛaṇāṇūru* 11 is mostly in the **vañci** meter but ends in the **ācīriyam**; *paripāṭal* 5 demonstrates a mixture of **ācīriyam** and **vañci** meters in lines 17-22; *paripāṭal* 18 has a mixture of **veṇṇpā** and **ācīriyam** in lines 49-56; *kalittokai* 11 has a mixture of **kali** and **ācīriyam** in lines 1-4.

### paripāṭṭu and kalippā

The terms **paripāṭṭu** and **kalippā** do not refer to meters. Rather, they are types of poems which employ different kinds of meters such as the **ācīriyam**, **veṇṇpā**, and **kali**. They contain several components of which some are similar but vary in terms of their structure or content. These components are **taravu**, **eruttu**, **tāḷicai**, **iṭai-nilai-p-pāṭṭu**, **koccakam**, **arākam**, **eṇ**, **aṭai** or **aṭai-nilai-k-kiḷavi**, **taṇi-c-col**, **curitakam**, **pōkku**, **vaippu**, **vāram**, and **aṭakkiyal**.<sup>77</sup> These components are discussed next before the structures of **paripāṭṭu/paripāṭal** and **kalippā** are explained.

#### **taravu** and **eruttu** (“introduction; prelude”)

The components **taravu** and **eruttu** are similar. In general, the term **taravu** means ‘bringing’ while **eruttu** refers to the ‘nape.’<sup>78</sup> Traditional commentators explain that **taravu** is like the face of a song whereas **curitakam** ‘wrapping up, folding’ is like the feet, while **eruttu** lies there to receive the components like **tāḷicai**, **koccakam**, and **arākam** as a limb leaning on to the **taravu**.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>77</sup> The earlier convention maintains subtle distinctions between some of these components. By the later convention, **taravu** and **eruttam** (< **eruttu**) are the same as are the **tāḷicai** and **iṭai-nilai-p-pāṭṭu**; **arākam** and **mutukiyal**; **eṇ**, **ampōtaraṇkam**, and **coṇcīr aṭi**; **taṇi-c-col** and **kūṇ**; and the **curitakam**, **pōkkiyal** (< **pōkku**), **vaippu**, **vāram**, and **aṭakkiyal** (*Yāpp-arunkalakkārikai*:103-104, Rule 30).

<sup>78</sup> The earlier convention is to understand them as separate items and the later is to take them as referring to the same item (quoted in U.V. Saminathier’s commentary on *paripāṭal*:xi; *Ḵam*:487, *cey*.426; *Nacc*:191, *cey*.152).

<sup>79</sup> *Ḵam*:487, *cey*.426; *Pē*:314-315, *cey*.444.

Both **taravu** and **eruttu** have been identified to occur in a **paripāṭṭu** while the earlier convention associates only **eruttu** with **paripāṭṭu**.<sup>80</sup> Further, the **eruttu** is optional in a **paripāṭṭu**.<sup>81</sup> These components occur as the first part of a **paripāṭṭu** or a **kalippā** and the **eruttu** occurs after the **taravu** in a **paripāṭṭu** (e.g., *pari.1:1-5*; *kali.2:1-10*; *pari.1:6-13*). The **taravu** is supposed to have a minimum of four and a maximum of twelve lines.<sup>82</sup> But, in classical Tamil poetry, the **taravu** has a minimum of three and a maximum of thirteen lines (e.g., *kali.16:1-4*; *25:1-12*; *149:1-3*; *75:1-13*). There is no specification found in traditional grammars for the length of an **eruttu**; commentator says that it has a minimum of two lines and a maximum of ten lines.<sup>83</sup> No meter is specified for these components.

#### **tāḷicai** and **iṭai-nilai-p-pāṭṭu** (“middle songs”)

The **tāḷicai** and **iṭai-nilai-p-pāṭṭu** are similar. They occur after the **taravu** and before **taṇiccol** and **curitakam**. In most cases, one or the other occurs in a **kalippā**. The **tāḷicai**, literally meaning ‘subdued tone’, is supposed to have a descending/receding sound (“*tālam paṭṭa ōcai*”) and is in the **ācīriyam** meter. It is either equal to or shorter than the **taravu** and, in general, has a minimum of two lines and a maximum of four lines (e.g., *kali.5:10-11*; *4:9-12*). In a certain type of **kalippā** called the **kocaka-k-kalippā**, the **tāḷicai** can have more than four lines (e.g., *kali.68:6-11*). In any case, there can be one, two, three, or four **tāḷicai** in a poem, and all the **tāḷicai** would focus on just one theme which is an expansion of what is

<sup>80</sup> *Ḵam:486, cey.426.*

<sup>81</sup> *Nacc:144, cey.121.*

<sup>82</sup> *Nacc:157, cey.133.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ḵam:487, cey.426.*

introduced in the taravu (e.g., *kali.108:26-29; 149:4-7, 8-11; 2:11-14, 15-18, 19-22; 106:34-36, 37-39, 40-42, 43-45*). The *tālicai* is sometimes referred to as an *iṭai-nilai-p-pāṭṭu* because it occurs in the middle of a poem.<sup>84</sup>

The *iṭai-nilai-p-pāṭṭu* obtains its name which means ‘song standing in the middle’ because it occurs between the taravu and the curitakam (e.g., *kali.16:5-8, 9-12, 13-16*). It also is equal to or shorter than the *taravu* (e.g., *kali. 16:5-8, 9-12, 13-16; 75:14-17, 18-21, 22-25*). The meter here is *ācīriyam* or *veṇpā*. The *iṭai-nilai-p-pāṭṭu* which is similar to the *tālicai* in terms of focusing on one theme is in the *ācīriyam* meter (e.g., *kali.75:14-17, 18-21, 22-25*). It does not necessarily have to produce a subdued tone like the *tālicai* (e.g., *kali.75:14-17, 18-21, 22-25; kali.128:10-13, 14-17, 18-21; kali.137:8-12, 13-17, 18-22*). The *iṭai-nilai-p-pāṭṭu* that occurs like a song (*pāṭṭu*) is in the *veṇpā* meter and there can be more than one of this type in a *kalippā* (e.g., *kali.115:10-16; 108:9-14, 20-24, 35-44, 46-50, 52-56*). The longer type, called the *neṭu veṇ pāṭṭu* ‘long song in *veṇpā* meter’, is supposed to have a maximum of twelve lines, while the shorter one, *kuṟu veṇ pāṭṭu* ‘long song in *veṇpā* meter’, has a minimum of two lines. Note that the *neṭu veṇ pāṭṭu* does exceed the limit of twelve lines (e.g., *kali.83:8-25*). Further, these songs allow four feet in their last line and metrical binding other than *veṇ tālai* (e.g., *kali.50:6-14, 15-17; 141:15-16; 64:24-25*).

---

<sup>84</sup> Pē:314, cey.444.

**koccakam** (“pleats”)

The component **koccakam** got its name on analogy.<sup>85</sup> The term basically refers to the several pleats in a garment. In prosody, it is a component which is similar to a **venṇpā** in terms of having its last line with three feet. However, it does not have to end like a **venṇpā** and does allow an **aiñcīraṭi** (line with five metrical feet), an **ācīriya aṭi**, **venṇpā aṭi**, **vañci aṭi**, **kali aṭi**, **corcīraṭi**, or **muṭukiyaḷ aṭi**.<sup>86</sup> For example, *kali.41:11* is an **aiñcīraṭi**; *kali.43:20* is an **ācīriya aṭi**; *kali.39:10* is a **venṇpā aṭi**; *kali.103:26, 60* are **vañci aṭi**; *kali.94:1, 3* are **corcīr aṭi**; and *kali.103:22-23; 104:42-43* are **muṭukiyaḷ aṭi**. Commentators say that **koccakam** is a component consisting of smaller or larger units, or a mixture of both. Furthermore, they add, it is not like the component **eṇ** which contains lines that are gradually shortened, but is composed of lines, feet, and bindings which vary.<sup>87</sup> It occurs after the **taravu** and before **taṇi-c-col** and **curitakam**, and there is always more than one **koccakam** in a poem occurring in more than one place (e.g., *pari.ti.1:6-21, 31-59; kali.39:7-10, 11-14, 15-18, 20-21, 22-25, 26-29, 31-32, 33-44; kali.41:5-38; kali.102:9-16, 25-27, 28-32*).

**arākam** (“rapid movement”)

The component called the **arākam** also obtained its name on analogy. Commentators note that **arākam** is like the process of adding something to gold to make it melt (**arākittal** ‘melting, loosening, rapid movement’). In prosody, it is a component recognized when a section is full of short letters (e.g., *kali. 102:17-20, 25; pari.1:14-25*). It occurs after the **koccakam**

<sup>85</sup> Commentators note that in their time the term **koccakam** was used as **koycakam**, pertaining to women’s garment (Nacc:191, cey.152; Pē:349, cey.464). It may also be noted that in Modern Tamil the term for the pleats in a women’s traditional garment is **kocuvam**.

<sup>86</sup> *ḷam*:486, cey.426; Nacc:146, cey.121; Pē:300, cey.433.

<sup>87</sup> Nacc:191, cey.152; Pē:349, cey.464.



and before **eṇ** (Nacc:144, 192; Pē:349) with a minimum of two and a maximum of six lines.<sup>88</sup>

**eṇ** (“counts; groups”)

The term **eṇ** means ‘count.’ In prosody, the component **eṇ** comes after the **tālicai**. Normally it occurs as groups of lines which are strung together by alliteration (**toṭai** ‘stringing’).<sup>89</sup> Each group contains a certain number of counts (**eṇ**) and the length of each count gets shorter gradually, like receding waves. Different schools of thought seem to have existed with regard to how the lines are shortened in each group.<sup>90</sup> Note that all take the standard line (**aṭi**) to be composed of four metrical feet (**cīr**) per line.

According to one school, the **eṇ** are shortened as follows: first, by halving the number of lines (**aṭi**) and then by reducing the number of feet (**cīr**) in each line by one foot, at the same time doubling the number of lines. By this method, there would be two couplets with four metrical feet per line in the first count, and the second count would have four lines with four metrical feet per line followed subsequently by the third count with eight lines having three metrical feet per line and sixteen lines having two metrical feet per line.<sup>91</sup>

Another school sees lines in subsequent counts (**eṇ**) are shortened by half every time.<sup>92</sup> By this method, the first count consists of two couplets, each couplet composed of two lines with four **cīr** each. The

<sup>88</sup> Iḷam:487, cey.426.

<sup>89</sup> Nacc:167, cey.145; Pē:326, cey.457.

<sup>90</sup> Iḷam:500, cey.448; Nacc:167, cey.145; Pē:326, cey.457.

<sup>91</sup> Iḷam:500, cey.448.

<sup>92</sup> Nacc:167, cey.145; Pē:326, cey.457.

second count would reflect a 50 percent cut in the structure of the couplet, having four lines with four *cīr* per line. The third count would reflect a further 50 percent shortening, having eight half-lines with two *cīr* per half-line. The last count would be further reduced by 50 percent, having sixteen quarter-lines with one *cīr* per quarter-line. Note that the tradition does not use the terms “half-line” and “quarter-line” which are provided for the purposes of the current volume. The tradition uses the term *aṭi* with respect to the the first two counts and describes the last two counts in terms of *cīr*. Accordingly, the first count is *īr-aṭi iraṇṭu* ‘two (counts) consisting of two *aṭi* (each).’ The second count is *ōr aṭi nāṅku* ‘four (counts) consisting of one *aṭi* (each).’ The third is *iru cīr eṭṭu* ‘eight (counts) consisting of two *cīr* (each).’ And the last one is *oru cīr patināru* ‘sixteen (counts) consisting of one *cīr* (each).’<sup>93</sup> The third and fourth counts can have just four and eight counts respectively instead of eight and sixteen so as to be called *iru-cīr nāṅku* and *oru-cīr eṭṭu*.<sup>94</sup>

In order to understand the concept of the component *eṇ* in Tamil prosody, one also has to pay attention to the feet containing the alliteration. Then, one can see that in *eṇ*, the first group consists of two couplets with eight feet per couplet wherein the first and fifth feet in each couplet share an alliteration. Here, a count has two lines. The second group reflects a 50 percent reduction in the number of feet per count. Here, a count has one line, the second count has four lines where each line has four feet. The alliteration between the first feet of the first two lines is different from that which exists between the first feet of the last two lines. The third group has eight counts where each count has only two feet. Here, a count represents a half-line. One alliteration exists between the first feet in

<sup>93</sup> Pē:328-331, cey.458.

<sup>94</sup> Pē:331, cey.458.

counts one and three. Another alliteration exists between the first feet in counts five and seven. The last group has one foot per count and there are sixteen such counts. Here, a count represents a quarter-line. An alliteration exists between the first and fifth feet. The same or a different alliteration exists between the ninth and thirteenth feet.

The couplet which represents two counts and is composed of eight feet gets the name **pēreṇ** 'large count.' The group of four counts with four feet per line is **cirreṇ** 'small count.' The group of eight counts with two feet per count is called **iṭai eṇ** 'middle count' because it stands between the **pēreṇ** and **cirreṇ**. The last group of sixteen counts with just one foot per count is **aḷavu eṇ** 'unit count, threshold count'.<sup>95</sup> It is also known as **cinṇam** 'smallest' because it reflects the gradual decrease in the number of feet that make up the component **eṇ**. Occasionally, the group of counts with two feet per line, whether there are eight or four counts in the group, is called a **cinṇam** (e.g., *kali.102:21-24*).

It is possible but not necessary to have all the four types of **eṇ** — **pēreṇ**, **cirreṇ**, **iṭai eṇ**, and **cinṇam** — in a poem. However, since the structure of the component **eṇ** is supposed to represent the receding nature of waves, the groups of lines should always reflect the gradual receding.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, it is possible to have all the four groups (**pēreṇ**, **cirreṇ**, **iṭai eṇ**, and **aḷavu eṇ/cinṇam**), or the first three (**pēreṇ**, **cirreṇ**, and **iṭai eṇ**), or the last two (**iṭai eṇ** and **aḷavu eṇ/cinṇam**), or the last one by itself (**aḷavu eṇ/cinṇam**) as in *kali.102:21-24*. But it is not possible to skip one or two groups at random to have just the first and last groups (**pēreṇ** and **aḷavu eṇ/cinṇam**) or just the second and the third (**cirreṇ** and **iṭai eṇ**), or the second and the fourth (**cirreṇ** and **aḷavu eṇ/cinṇam**).

<sup>95</sup> Nacc:167-168, cey.145; Pē:327, cey.457.

<sup>96</sup> Nacc:168-174, cey.146.

An example is here repeated from the commentary on the **poruḷatikāram** of the **Tolkāppiyam** by **Pērācīriyar** (pp.328-329):

வேள்வி யாற்றி விதிவழி யொழுகிய  
தாழ்வி லந்தணர் தம்வினை யாயினை;

வினையி னீங்கி விழுத்தவஞ் செய்யு  
முனைவர் தமக்கு முத்தி யாயினை;

This is the first group consisting of two couplets (or counts) with eight **cīr** per couplet. The first and fifth feet in each couplet share an alliteration, marked in bold type.

இலனென விகழ்ந்தோர்க் கில்லையு மாயினை;  
யுளனென வுணர்ந்தோர்க் குளையு மாயினை;  
யருவுரு வென்போர்க் கவையு மாயினை;  
பொருவற விளங்கிய போத மாயினை;

This is the second group, reflecting a 50 percent reduction in the number of **cīr** per count, so this group has four counts where each count has four **cīr**. The alliteration between the first feet of the first two counts is different from that which exists between the first feet of the last two counts. The counts are separated by a semicolon and the alliterations are marked in bold type.

பானிற வண்ணனி; பனிமதிக் கடவுணி;  
நீனிற வருவுநீ; நிறமிகு கனலிநீ;  
யறுமுக வொருவனி; யானிழற் கடவுணி;  
பெறுதிரு வருவுநீ; பெட்பன வருவுநீ;

This is the third group which has eight counts in which each count has only two **cīr**. One alliteration exists between the first feet in counts one and three. Another alliteration exists between the first feet in counts five and seven. The counts are separated by a semicolon and the alliterations are marked in bold type.

மண்ணுநீ; விண்ணுநீ; மலையுநீ; கடலுநீ;  
 யெண்ணுநீ; யெழுத்துநீ; யிரவுநீ; பகலுநீ;  
 பண்ணுநீ; பாவுநீ; பாட்டுநீ; தொடருநீ;  
 யண்ணநீ; யமலநீ; யருளுநீ; பொருளுநீ

This is the last group which has one **cīr** per count and there are sixteen counts spread over four lines. The same alliteration exists between the first, fifth, ninth, and thirteenth **cīr**.

In *kali.102:21-24*, there is **cinnam** with two **cīr** per count. The counts are separated by a semicolon; alliterations are marked in bold type:

எழுந்தது துகள்;  
 ஏற்றனர் மார்பு;  
 கவிழ்ந்தன மருப்பு;  
 கலங்கினர் பலர்

**aṭai** (“enclosed lone words”)

The component **aṭai** which is also known as **aṭai-nilai-k-kiṭavi** ‘word which stands enclosed’ gets its name because it is flanked by other

components.<sup>97</sup> It is called **ṭaṇi-c-col** ‘lone word’ by the later convention because it could make up a metrical foot by itself in a line (e.g., *kali.75:26; pari.1:49, 61*). In fact, the **aṭai-nilai-k-kiḷavi** has more than one word in most cases (e.g., *kali.71:21*). In **ottāḷicai-k-kalippā**, there is only one **aṭai-nilai-k-kiḷavi** and it occurs after the **tāḷicai** and before the **curitakam** (e.g., *kali.2:23*). In most **ottāḷicai-k-kalippā**, the word **āṇka/āṇku** is the **aṭai-nilai-k-kiḷavi** or it occurs as part of the latter (*kali.99:17, 74:12, 75:26*). In other types of **kalippā**, the **aṭai-nilai-k-kiḷavi** occurs after the **taravu** and anywhere before the **curitakam**, and there could be more than one in a poem (e.g., *kali.50:18; 64:11, 26; 82:8; 105:23, 61, 70; 106:6, 15, 30, 46*). In **paripāṭal**, one or two **ṭaṇi-c-col** occur in a poem (e.g., *pari.8:124, 20:40, 83, 95*).

### **curitakam** (“folding”)

The **curitakam** ‘wrapping up, folding’ is the section that ends the subject matter of a **paripāṭal** in the **āciriyam** or **veṇṇpā** meter (e.g., *pari.1:62-65; 16:50-55*).<sup>98</sup> There can be more than one **curitakam** in a **paripāṭal** (e.g., *pari.1:50-54, 62-65*).

### **pōkku** (“wrapping”)

The **pōkku** is like the **curitakam**. It is called **pōkku** because it states the intent and makes the composition reach an end without saying anything more.<sup>99</sup> It is also called **vaippu** ‘keeping, preserving’ because it collects and contains the subjects stated in **taravu** and **tāḷicai** (e.g.,

<sup>97</sup> Nacc:156, cey.132; Pē:315, cey.444.

<sup>98</sup> ḷam:487, cey.426; Nacc:147, cey.121.

<sup>99</sup> Nacc:158, cey.136; Pē:315, cey.444.

*kali.8:19-23*).<sup>100</sup> The meter is **ācīriyam** or **veṇṇpā** (e.g., *kali.38:23-26; 22:19-22*). It is similar to **taravu** in structure and ends a **kalippā**, occasionally occurring in the middle also (e.g., *kali.39:20-21, 46-51*). It could have a minimum of two or three lines.<sup>101</sup> In most cases, it is half as long as the **taravu** (e.g., *kali.4:22-25*) and occasionally, is longer than the **taravu** (e.g., *kali.16:18-22*). In classical Tamil poetry, the **curitakam** has a minimum of two and a maximum of seven lines (e.g., *kali. 8:19-20; 5:17-19; 4:22-25; 75:27-33*). It reiterates the subject matter of the **iṭai-nilai-p-pāṭṭu** (e.g., *kali.8:19-20; 5:17-19*) and expresses the intent (e.g., *kali.8:20-23*). It can contain the subject matter of the **taravu** (e.g., *kali.38:23-26*) but does not have to (e.g., *kali.54:16-20*).

### **vāram** (“container”)

The **vāram** has a containing nature which is known by the term **aṭakkiyal**. It is similar to the **taravu**. One commentator explains that it contains everything expressed by the rest of the components in the poem,<sup>102</sup> while another distinguishes **vāram** and **aṭakkiyal** by saying that **aṭakkiyal** gives one name and confines a god who has already been praised through numerous names, whereas **vāram** has lines which praise human beings as well.<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup> Pē:315, cey.444.

<sup>101</sup> Ḵam:496, cey.441; Nacc:159, cey.137; Pē:319, cey.449.

<sup>102</sup> Pē:315, cey.444.

<sup>103</sup> Nacc:167, cey.144.

### Structure of a **paripāṭal**

The **paripāṭal**, a type of song, is supposed to accommodate several kinds of lines (**aṭi**) and meters (**pā**) unlike the **kali**.<sup>104</sup> It has the components **taravu**, **eruttu**, **koccakam**, **arākam**, **aṭakkiyal**, and **curitakam**, and its intended emotion is erotic love (**kāmam**). The themes of the song are descriptions of mountains, rivers, and towns and various playful activities that happen in those places.<sup>105</sup> Lines with seven metrical feet (**eḷucīraṭi**) filled with short syllables were introduced above as **muṭukiyal aṭi**. The **muṭukiyal aṭi** and **corcīraṭi** are proper to a **paripāṭal**.

### Structure of a **kalippā**

The **kalippā** is of four basic types: **ottāḷicai-k-kali**, **kali veṇ pāṭṭu**, **koccakam**, and **uraḷ kali**.

#### **ottāḷicai-k-kali**

**ottāḷicai-k-kali** gets its name because it contains the component called **ottāḷicai**.<sup>106</sup> It is subdivided into two varieties. One variety called the **ottāḷicai-k-kali** has four components: **taravu**, **tāḷicai** or **iṭai-nilai-p-pāṭṭu**, **aṭai**, and **pōkku** (e.g., *kali.74, 128*). In this, the **taravu** has a minimum of four and a maximum of twelve lines (e.g. *kali.124, 25*). Occasionally the **taravu** has thirteen lines (e.g., *kali.75*). The **tāḷicai** here have a minimum of two and a maximum of four lines (e.g., *kali.5, 4*). All the **tāḷicai** within a poem must be of equal length, justifying the name **ottāḷicaikkali** “**kali**

<sup>104</sup> Pē:297, 299, cey.430, 432.

<sup>105</sup> Nacc:144, cey.121; Pē:303, cey.433.

<sup>106</sup> Nacc:155, cey.130.



poem containing **talīcai** of equal length.” There are 58 such **ottālīcaikkali** in classical Tamil poetry: *kalittokai* 2-5, 8-11, 13-17, 20, 22, 25, 27, 28-31, 34, 35, 38, 44-46, 48, 49, 52, 53, 57-59, 66, 67, 69, 70-79, 99, 100, 121, 123, 124, 126-128, 132, 134, 135.<sup>107</sup>

The other variety of **ottālīcai-k-kali** prays to the gods, and is of two kinds: **vaṇṇakam** and **oru pōku**. There is no **vaṇṇaka ottālīcai-k-kali**, and there is only one **oru pōku ottālīcai** in classical Tamil poetry: *kalittokai* 1, which is an invocation (**kaṭavuḷ vālittu**).

### **vaṇṇaka ottālīcai-k-kali and oru pōku ottālīcai-k-kali**

The **vaṇṇaka ottālīcai k kali** is supposed to have four parts: **taravu**, **tālīcai**, **eṇ**, and **vāram**. The **taravu** here is composed of four, six, or eight lines, where each line has four metrical feet (**nēraṭi**). The **ottālīcai** are three in number of equal length and contain the same subject matter (**poruḷ**). These **tālīcai** are shorter than the **taravu**. In specific, they would have a minimum of three and a maximum of four lines.<sup>108</sup>

The **oru pōku ottālīcai-k-kalippā** is of two kinds: **koccaka orupōku** and **ampōtaraṅkam**.<sup>109</sup>

### **koccaka-oru-pōku**

The **koccaka oru pōku** would have either **taravu** or **tālīcai**. It may have **eṇ**. The **taravu** may be elaborate without **aṭakkiyal** and end the **pā**

<sup>107</sup> According to commentators, there are 68 **ottālīcaikkali** in *kalittokai* (Nacc:155, cey.130; Pē:312, cey.442). But Naccinārkkīṇiyar’s commentary on *kalittokai* accounts only for 58.

<sup>108</sup> Nacc:166, cey.143.

<sup>109</sup> Nacc:174-175, cey.148.

without a **curitakam**. The mode of composition (**yāppu**) and the content (**poruḷ**) may also be different from others. It has a minimum of ten and a maximum of twenty lines. The poem identified as a **koccaka oru pōku** in classical Tamil poetry, in fact, has **taravu** and **tāḷicai** in addition to **taṇi-c-col** and **curitakam**: *kalittokai 1* which is an invocation to the deity Śiva. One traditional commentator, Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar, explains that the poem is construed as a **koccaka oru pōku**, rather than as an **ottāḷicai-k-kali**, because it is a song to a deity (**tēva-pāṇi**), and that it is not **vaṇṇakam** because it does not have **eṇ** and **cinṇam**.<sup>110</sup>

### **ampōtaraṅka oru pōku**

The **ampōtaraṅka oru pōku** is supposed to have 60 lines. If the lines in each couplet are considered, the number is 120. The minimum number of lines is fifteen. The components of the **ampōtaraṅka oru pōku** are **eruttu**, **koccakam**, **arākam**, **cirreṇ**, and **aṭakkiyal vāram**. There is no **ampōtaraṅka oru pōku** attested in classical Tamil.

### **kali-veṇ-pāṭṭu**

The **kali veṇ pāṭṭu** gets its name because it is a poem in a **veṇpā** which has “become” a **kalippā**.<sup>111</sup> It is composed of lines (**veḷḷaṭi**) with **iyarcīr** and **veṇcīr**. Two types of **kali veṇ pāṭṭu** have been identified: **kali veṇpā** and **veṇ kalippā**.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Nacc:6-7, commentary on *kalittokai 1*.

<sup>111</sup> Nacc:155, cey.130.

<sup>112</sup> The later convention specifies that **kali veṇpā** employs only **veṇ taḷai** whereas the **veṇ kalippā** employs the **kalittaḷai** and **veṇ cīr veṇ taḷai** (*Yāpparuṅkalakkārikai*:113-114, Rule 31). The earlier convention does not have this specification.

### kali-venṇā

The first kind of kali veṇ pāṭṭu, the **kali venṇā**, can further be identified as having two different structure types. One type is not supposed to exceed twelve lines, but in classical Tamil poetry only two kali venṇā follow this rule: one has eleven lines (*kalittokai* 6) and the other has twelve lines (*kalittokai* 18), while all the others with this structure have more than twelve lines (e.g., *kalittokai* 12, 24, 37, 65, 111). This type of kali venṇā could convey the intended subject matter obliquely, not directly (e.g., *kalittokai* 18). Mostly veṇ taḷai is used here, although ācīriyattaḷai also occurs occasionally (e.g., *kalittokai* 24, 12). The lines (aṭi) here are aḷavaṭi (four cīr) and the last line is similar to the last line in a **venṇā**, having three metrical feet with nēr, nēru, nirai, or niraipu as the last **acai/cīr** (*kalittokai* 6). There are eight kali venṇā with this structure in classical Tamil: *kalittokai* 6, 12, 18, 24, 37, 51, 65, 111.

The second type of **kali venṇā** has several components like the taravu, iṭai-nilai-p-pāṭṭu, pōkku, taṇi-c-col, and curitakam. In classical Tamil, the following 25 are the kali venṇā with this structure: *kalittokai* 42, 50, 64, 80-84, 86, 88, 89, 92, 96, 98, 109, 110, 115, 116, 138, 139, 140-143, 146. For the most part, this type of kali venṇā would have four feet per line and allow five or even six metrical feet occasionally (e.g., *kalittokai* 84). In this type, the **iṭai-nilai-p-pāṭṭu** occurs between **taravu** and **pōkku** (e.g., *kalittokai* 81). Then, a **curitakam** in the **ācīriyam** or **venṇā** meter would end the **kali venṇā** (e.g., *kalittokai* 146, 83). Rarely, the **curitakam** in the **venṇā** meter ends with a **cīr** which has more than one **acai** (*kalittokai* 80; cf. Nacc:197). The **curitakam** need not be preceded by a **taṇi-c-col** (e.g., *kalittokai* 116).

### veṇ-kalippā

The second kind of *kali veṇ pāṭṭu*, known as the **veṇ kalippā**, exceeds twelve lines in which metrical bindings other than **veṇ taḷai** also occur. A line with five metrical feet (**aiñcīr aṭi**) is also permissible. The poem ends like a **veṇpā**. The intended subject matter (**poruḷ**) here is directly conveyed. There is only one *veṇ kalippā* in classical Tamil poetry (*kalittokai* 63).

### koccaka-k-kalippā

The **koccaka-k-kalippā** gets its name by the variety of components it has.<sup>113</sup> It may contain the same components as the **kali veṇpā**, but may not be similar to it in structure. The **koccakam** can be in **veṇpā** meter, which need not prevail in the poem, since just one component such as the **taravu** could be in **veṇpā** (e.g., *kalittokai* 7). Two **taravu** can occur in a sequence in **koccaka-k-kalippā**, and need not be followed by **tāḷicai** (e.g., *kalittokai* 19). The **taravu** can be followed by a **curitakam** with or without a **taṇi-c-col** in between (e.g., *kalittokai* 32). The **tāḷicai** here differ from the **tāḷicai** occurring in other types of **kalippā**, because they are either interrupted by a **corcīraṭi** or are not of equal length (e.g., *kalittokai* 36, 33, 47). Also there could be just one, two, three, or four **tāḷicai** in a poem (e.g., *kalittokai* 108, 149, 118, 106). The following 49 poems have been identified as **koccaka-k-kalippā** in classical Tamil poetry: *kalittokai* 7, 19, 21, 23, 26, 32, 33, 36, 39, 40, 41, 43, 47, 54-56, 61, 62, 68, 85, 90, 93-95, 97, 101-108, 112, 117-120, 122, 125, 129-131, 133, 144, 145, 147-149.

---

<sup>113</sup> Nacc:155, cey.130.

### uraḷ kali

The **uraḷ kali** gets its name from its content.<sup>114</sup> It is like a dialogue, in that it has statements (**kūrṟu**) and responses (**mārṟam**). It does not contain the feature **pōkku** to wrap up what is said in the previous lines, but can have **curitakam**. The **curitakam** is in the **ācīriyam** meter. There are five **uraḷ kali** in classical Tamil poetry: *kalittokai* 60, 87, 91, 113, 114.

### aḷavu (length)

The term **aḷavu** ‘measure’ in Tamil prosody refers to the size of a poem. The **ācīriyappāṭṭu** ‘song/poem in **ācīriyam** meter’ has a minimum of three and a maximum of 1,000 lines. The **neṭu veṇ pāṭṭu** ‘long song in **veṇpā** meter’ is supposed to have a maximum of twelve lines, while the **kuṟu veṇ pāṭṭu** ‘short song in **veṇpā** meter’ has a minimum of two lines. The **aṅkata-p-pāṭṭu** ‘satirical song/poem’ has a minimum of two and a maximum of twelve lines. The **kali veṇ pāṭṭu**, **kaikkilāi-c-ceyyuḷ**, and compositions that focus on **puṟa nilai**, **vāyurāi**, and **ceviyurāi** do not have any particular limit on the number of lines. The latter three contain words of wisdom and employ the **veṇpā** meter in the beginning and end in the **ācīriyam**. The **paripāṭal** has a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 400 lines.

Compositions (**ceyyuḷ**) in which there is no limit on the number of lines are treatises (**nūḷ**), expositions (**urai**), riddles (**pici**), axioms (**mutu moḷi**), and mnemonics containing secret messages (**marāi moḷi kiḷakkum mantiram**); they do not play a role in classical Tamil poems.

---

<sup>114</sup> Nacc:155, cey.130.

## Processes of Tamil Prosody

Theoreticians of classical Tamil poetry have provided two terms, **yāppu** and **tūkku**, which refer to certain mechanisms of poetry.

### **yāppu** (process of composition)

The term **yāppu** literally means ‘tying.’ In the tradition of Tamil poetry, **yāppu** refers to the process of composition using letters (**eḷuttu**), basic metrical units (**acai**), metrical feet (**cīr**), and lines (**aṭi**). It is defined as “establishing the intended subject matter so that it is completed in the lines that are formed by items such as **eḷuttu**.”<sup>115</sup> The process of composing the subject matter (**poruḷ**) has the following seven bases (**nilam**): the song or poem (**pāṭṭu**) which the classical Tamil poems exemplify, expositions (**urai**), treatises (**nūl**), improvisation or recitation (**vāymoḷi**), riddles (**pici**), satire (**aṅkatam**), and axioms (**mutu col**).

### **tūkku** (process of assessment/evaluation)

Traditional commentators explain that this term normally applies to various processes like weighing (**niṟuttal**), dividing (**aṟuttal**), and singing (**pāṭal**). In prosody, it refers to the process of measuring/evaluating/assessing a poem. Specifically, it is construed as the process of measuring the entity called **pā** (meter) by dividing it into various types of feet and lines.<sup>116</sup> Commentators compare this process to that of weighing gold and silver in terms of the traditional measurements known as the **kaḷañcu**, **toṭi**, and **tulām**. Further, they say that in a similar manner, **tukku** divides the **pā**,

<sup>115</sup> Nacc:77-78, cey.78.

<sup>116</sup> Nacc:84, cey.87; Pē:241, cey.399.

which is spread over a limited number of lines, in terms of those feet and lines and reveals the difference in the sounds (*ōcai*) of various *pā*.<sup>117</sup>

It was explained earlier under “*cīr*” that *tūkku* is one of the three components of a rhythmic cycle of beats (*tālam*) and that it represents the duration of one such cycle. Therefore, we have to understand *tūkku* as the duration of a rhythmic cycle of beats and as a process of determining the meter.

The process construed as *tūkku* is supposed to take place with respect to the meters known as the *ācīriyam*, *vañci*, *veṇṇpā*, and *kali*.<sup>118</sup> When such *tūkku* is performed and the duration of a certain cycle of rhythmic beats is established, a certain sound is supposed to result.

The sound resulting from a cycle of rhythmic beats in a poem is known by the term *ocai* ‘sound’ which may be equated to rhythm. Four such *ōcai* have been recognized in the tradition as proper to classical Tamil poetry: *akaval*, *ceppal*, *tullal*, and *tūṅkal*. It is said that a poem (*pāṭṭu*) is not articulated without these sounds.<sup>119</sup>

#### **akaval *ōcai* (‘calling sound’)**

The sound that is achieved through the *ācīriyam* meter is *akaval* ‘calling’ (< *akavu* ‘to call out’). It resides in an uninterrupted flow of narration. Traditional commentators explain it as follows: “There is also a mode in which a person says what he wants in whatever manner he wants. It is not like a statement and a reply where a person asks something and the other person replies. Those who practice it refer to it also as *alaittal* ‘addressing, calling out.’ The overall sound pervading their words

<sup>117</sup> Nacc:81, cey.81; Pē:238, cey.393.

<sup>118</sup> Nacc:84, cey.87.

<sup>119</sup> Nacc:83, cey.86.

is called **akaval**. It is heard in the words of craftsmen/carpenters (**taccu vinai mākkal**), those who sing about the battlefield (**kaḷam pāṭum vinaiṇar**), fortune tellers (**kaṭṭum kaḷaṅkum iṭṭu uraippār**), those who talk to themselves in a contradicting manner (monologues, **tammil uraḷntu uraippār**), and those who raise an uproar (**pūcal icaippār**)."<sup>120</sup>

### **ceppal ōcai** ('replying sound')

The sound perceived in the **venpā** meter is **ceppal** 'replying, proclaiming' (< **ceppu** 'to reply, proclaim, state'). It is the stately sound that arises when someone replies clearly to another in a natural/spontaneous manner without hiding anything.<sup>121</sup> The **ceppal ōcai** pervades the entire composition. A traditional commentator says that it has the sound of a sentence (**vākkiyam**) unlike the **akaval** which is musical/melodious.<sup>122</sup>

### **tuḷḷal ōcai** ('jumpy sound')

The sound heard in the **kali** meter is **tuḷḷal** 'jumping' < **tuḷḷu** 'to jump (like a fish).' It is described as an **ōcai** which does not have an uninterrupted pace but which flows high now and then. It is compared to the jumping of a calf.<sup>123</sup> Here, the stately sound created by a **veṇṇīr** is jerked by the following **veṇṇīr** which does not begin with a **nēr**, and this produces a jumpy sound (e.g., *kali.11:1-2, 4-5*).

<sup>120</sup> Nacc:82, cey.81; Pē:238, cey.393.

<sup>121</sup> "maṟaittuk kūṟātu ceppik kuṟutal"; Nacc:194, cey.153.

<sup>122</sup> Ḵam:457, cey.387.

<sup>123</sup> Ḵam:457, cey.388.



### **tūṅkal ōcai** ('sedate/suspending sound')

The sound created by the **vañci** meter is **tūṅkal** 'suspending' (< **tūṅku** 'to suspend'). Each metrical foot producing this meter is supposed to hold this **ōcai**. The **ōcai** does not stretch across a foot, but is confined to it.

Traditional commentators note that **akaval** and **ceppal** are the only two sounds that were put into use outside of poetry, and that **tuḷḷal** and **tūṅkal** appear only in poetry.<sup>124</sup> Note that the **akaval** and **ceppal** sounds pervade the entire composition while the **tuḷḷal** and **tūṅkal** are controlled and contained by individual metrical feet.

### Aesthetic Components

Stringing (**toṭai**), rhythmic effect (**vaṇṇam**), and fastening (**māṭṭu**) are the structural components which beautify Tamil poems.

#### **toṭai** (stringing)

The term **toṭai** literally means 'stringing' < **toṭu** 'to string (like flowers).' In Tamil poetic tradition, it refers to the way in which successive feet or lines are strung in a poem. These feet and lines are strung by similar syllables and words or contrasting words. The occurrence of similar syllables and words in successive feet or lines corresponds to "alliteration," whereas the contrasting words correspond to "antonyms." According to one commentator, **toṭai** must beautify poetry like a string of flowers.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>124</sup> Nacc:82-83, cey.81-84; Pē:238-239, cey.393-396.

<sup>125</sup> Pē:252, cey.406.

Four basic types of **toṭai** are recognized: **mōṇai**, **etukai**, **iyaipu**, and **muraṇ**. Among these, the first three are phonological, based on the shape of the words, and the last one is semantic, based on the meaning of the words that may or may not rhyme. A secondary type of phonological alliteration is also identified: **aḷapeṭai-t-toṭai**. Two specific modes of employing **toṭai** are **niral nirai** and **iraṭṭai**. In the absence of these recognized types of **toṭai**, there would exist what is known as **centoṭai** ‘perfect stringing’, obviously an euphemism.

### Positional Categorization of **toṭai**

The feature **toṭai** is basically positional in the sense that it is considered to bring up a connection between same part(s) of different metrical feet (**cīr**) within the same line (**aṭi**) or across lines. The parts of a foot for this purpose can be referred to as the beginning, second/middle, and end. Then the positional **toṭai** can be sub-categorized according to the phonological shape or meaning of the items which are involved in this process.

In general, when there is alliteration between the beginning parts of different feet, it acquires the generic reference **mōṇai-t-toṭai** or simply **mōṇai** (< **mun** ‘to be in the front/beginning’). Similar alliteration between subsequent parts of different feet is called **etukai-t-toṭai** or simply **etukai** (?< **etirkai** ‘facing’ < **etir** ‘to face, to be in front’). The alliteration at the end parts of different feet receives the name **iyaipu-t-toṭai** or simply **iyaipu** (< **iyai** ‘to agree’).

Alliteration between different feet across lines has different names. If the alliteration is in the first feet in subsequent lines, then it is qualified to be an **aṭi**-alliteration, indicating that it is spread across lines. Thus, for example, **aṭi mōṇai** ‘line **mōṇai**’ is present if the first letter (**eḷuttu**) or **acai** or the whole first foot rhymes respectively with the first letter, **acai**, or the whole first foot of the next line. If such alliteration skips a line, then

it is called an **iṭai-iṭṭa**-alliteration, meaning that there is a gap “placed between” the rhyming lines.

Alliteration between different feet within a line also has different names. The one existing between the first and second feet within a line is an **iṇai** ‘pair’ alliteration. So, there is **iṇai mōṇai**, **iṇai etukai**, **iṇai iyaipu**, and **iṇai muraṇ**. Alliteration between the first and third feet is a **polippu** alliteration. An **orūu** (< oru(vu) ‘to be distant’) alliteration is that which exists between the first and fourth feet. The **kūlai** (‘immature, not fully grown’) alliteration is the one between the first, second, and third feet. If the first, second, and fourth feet carry the alliteration, then the latter is called a **kīlkkatuvāy** (< kīl + kku + atu + vāy) alliteration. A **mēṛkatuvāy** (< mēl + kku + atu + vāy) alliteration is that which occurs between the first, third, and fourth feet. If all four feet have the alliteration, then it is a **murru** ‘complete’ alliteration.

### Sub-categorization of **toṭai**

The positional categorization discussed above applies to all the four major types of **toṭai**, namely **mōṇai**, **etukai**, **muraṇ**, and **iyaipu**. The sub-categorization based on the nature of letters such as vowels and consonants applies only to **mōṇai** and **etukai**, while such categorization based on the meaning of words applies only to **muraṇ**.

### Sub-categorization of **toṭai** Based on the Nature of Letters

If the stringing/alliteration is due only to the consonants, not the vowels, then it is a **varukka** alliteration, meaning there is alliteration of the same consonant attached to different vowels. If the alliteration exists only in the vowels that are added to no/different consonants in the initial position, then it is called a **vali** alliteration “succeeding rhyme.” Alliteration between long vowels is a **neṭil** alliteration and that between short vowels

is a **uyir** alliteration. The alliteration due to the three classes of consonants is called an **ina** 'class' alliteration. Since there are the hard class (**val inam**), the soft class (**mel inam**), and the middle class (**iṭai inam**), there exist the **val-ina**-alliteration, **mel-ina**-alliteration, and **iṭai-ina**-alliteration. If the **varukka** alliteration spreads across different feet within a line, then there exists what is called a **cīr vakai varukka** alliteration such as **cīr vakai varukka mōnai** or **cīr vakai varukka etukai**.<sup>126</sup>

A subsequent type of these sub-categorical alliterations is an **anu** alliteration which treats the vowels or consonants which have the same or closest points of articulation as a class. For this purpose, **a**, **ā**, **ai**, and **au** form a class, as do **i**, **ī**, **e**, and **ē**; **u**, **ū**, **o**, and **ō**; **c** and **t**; **ñ** and **n**; and **m** and **v**.

As pointed out earlier, the sub-categorical alliterations apply to the two major positional alliterations, namely **mōnai** and **etukai**. There are some other similar alliterations special to the **etukai** and all of them concern the first feet in subsequent lines. If the alliteration skips the first parts of the feet and prevails in later parts, then it is qualified as a **talai āku** alliteration, but is special to **etukai**. So, there is **talai āku etukai**, but no **talai āku mōnai**. Similarly, the alliteration called **ācu iṭai iṭṭa etukai** is special to **etukai**. Here, certain consonants, **ய** (**y**), **ர** (**r**), and **ல** (**l**) when occurring as the second **eluttu** in only one of the several feet participating in an **etukai** process, are ignored and the following **eluttu** would be treated as the second **eluttu** in the alliteration. The third alliteration special to **etukai** is **mūnrām eluttu onru etukai** which, as its name suggests, is the alliteration between the third letters in different feet which are at the beginning of subsequent lines.

Minor variations in the above exist reflecting different conventions. According to the earlier convention, the **varukka** alliteration is common to

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Nacc:92, cey.94, where he gives examples of **சீர் வகை மெல்லின எதுகை** etc.

**mōṇai** and **etukai**. The **neṭil** and **aṇu** alliterations apply only to **mōṇai**. Alliterations focusing on short vowels (**uyir** alliteration) and the three classes (**val iṇam**, **mel iṇam**, and **iṭai iṇam**) of consonants, **ācu iṭai iṭṭa etukai**, and the **mūṇrām eḷuttu onru etukai** apply only to **etukai**. Thus, by this convention, there are ten sub-alliterations of which two are specific to **mōṇai** and six to **etukai**; two are common. Those ten alliterations are: **varukka mōṇai**, **varukka etukai**, **neṭil mōṇai**, **aṇu mōṇai**, **uyir etukai**, **val iṇa etukai**, **mel iṇa etukai**, **iṭai iṇa etukai**, **ācu iṭai iṭṭa etukai**, and **mūṇrām eḷuttu onru etukai**.

The later convention makes every sub-category of alliteration apply to every major type of alliteration so the entire scheme of **toṭai** is more symmetrical. It also adds a sub-category which gives a special qualifier **iraṇṭaṭi** ‘two lines’ to the alliteration, meaning that the alliteration prevails in two lines. Thus, for example, there would be an **iraṇṭaṭi mōṇai** if only two consecutive lines have a **mōṇai** alliteration and the **mōṇai** changes for the next two consecutive lines. Examples of the different alliterations/stringing found in classical Tamil poems are as follows. Items participating in this process are given in bold type.

Examples:

In *aiṅk.16:3-4*, the first **eḷuttu** in subsequent lines are identical, yielding **aṭi mōṇai**:

பூக்களு லூரனை யுள்ளிப்  
பூப்போ லுண்கண் பொன்போர்த் தனவே

In *kuru.4:3-4*, the first **acai** in subsequent lines are identical, yielding **aṭi mōṇai**:

அமை தற் கமைந்தநங் காதலர்  
அமை வில ராகுத னோமென் னெஞ்சே

In *kuṟu.359:5-6*, the first *cīr* in subsequent lines are identical, yielding *aṭi mōṇai*:

புதல்வன் தழீஇயினன் விறலவன்  
புதல்வன் தாயவன் புறங்கவைஇ யினளே

In *kuṟu.263:7-8*, the second *eḷuttu* are identical, yielding *aṭi etukai*. This is also known by the name *iṭai āku etukai*:

மழை வினா யாடு நாடனைப்  
பிழையே மாகிய நாமிதற் படவே

In *pura.187:3-4*, the feet excluding the first *eḷuttu* are identical, yielding *talai āku etukai*:

எவ்வழி நல்லவ ராடவர்  
அவ்வழி நல்லை வாழிய நிலனே

In *aka.15:1-2*, the consonant *ய்* intervenes between the first and second *eḷuttu* in line 2, yielding *ācu iṭai iṭṭa etukai*:

எம்வெங் காமம் இயைவ தாயின்  
மெய்ம்மலி பெரும்பூட் செம்மற் கோசர்

In *pura.3:1-2*, the third *eḷuttu* are identical, yielding *mūnṛām eḷuttu onru etukai*:

உவவுமதி யுருவி னோங்கல் வெண்குடை  
நில வுக்கடல் வரைப்பின் மண்ணக நிழற்ற

In *pura.41:5-6*, the last *eḷuttu* are identical, yielding *aṭi iyaipu*:

பெருமரத் திலையி னெடுங்கோடு வற்றல் பற்றவும்  
வெங்கதிர்க் கனலி தூற்றவும் பிறவும்

In *pura.187:1-2*, the last **cīr** are identical, yielding **aṭi iyaipu**:

நாடா கொன்றே காடா கொன்றே  
அவலா கொன்றே மிசையா கொன்றே

In *kuru.23:1, 3* the first **cīr** are identical, yielding **aṭi iṭai iṭṭa mōnai**:

அகவன் மகளே அகவன் மகளே  
மனவுக்கோப் பன்ன நன்னெடுங் கூந்தல்  
அகவன் மகளே பாடுக பாட்டே

In *peru.165, 167* the second **eḷuttu** are identical, yielding **aṭi iṭai iṭṭa etukai**:

எளருமை நல்லான் கருநாகு பெறுஉ  
மடிவாய்க் கோவலர் குடிவயிற் சேப்பி  
னிருங்கினை ஸெண்டின் சிறுபார்ப் பன்ன

In *pari.13:16, 18* the last **cīr** are identical, yielding **aṭi iṭai iṭṭa iyaipu**:

அவையவை கொள்ளுங் கருவியு நீயே  
முந்தியாங் கூறிய வைந்த னுள்ளும்  
ஒன்றறிற் போற்றிய விசம்பு நீயே

In *narr.167:6*, the first **eḷuttu** in the first and second **cīr** are identical, yielding **iṇai mōnai**:

பயன்தெரி பனுவல் பைதீர் பாண

In *narr.344:8*, the first **acai** in the first and second **cīr** are identical, yielding **iṇai mōnai**:

செல் வன் செல் லுங்கொல் தானே உயர்வரைப்

In *pari.13:5*, the second **eḷuttu** in the first and second **cīr** are identical, yielding **iṇai etukai**:

விண்ணளி கொண்ட வியன்மதி யணிகொள

In *pari.6:31*, the last **eluttu** in the first and second **cīr** from the back yield **iṇai iyaipu**:

அணியணி யாகிய தாரர் கருவியர்

In *pari.6:22*, the first and second **cīr** from the back yield **iṇai iyaipu**:

வரைச்சிறை யுடைத்ததை வையை வையை த்

In *narr.24:7*, the first **eluttu** in the first and third **cīr** are identical, yielding **polippu mōṇai**:

வெயில்வீற் றிருந்த வெம்பலை அருஞ்சரம்

In *narr.24:7*, the first **acai** in the first and third **cīr** are identical, yielding **polippu mōṇai**:

தன் றெனப் புரிந்தோய் தன் றுசெய்தனையே

In *kuru.23:1*, the first and third **cīr** are identical, yielding **polippu mōṇai**:

அகவ ன் மகளே அகவன் மகளே

In *narr.25:4*, the second **eluttu** in the first and third **cīr** are identical, yielding **polippu etukai**:

பொன்னுரை கல்லின் தன்னிறம் பெறுஉம்

In *narr.166:2*, the last **eluttu** in the first and third **cīr** from the back are identical, yielding **polippu iyaipu**:

தன்னர் மேனியும் நாறிருங் கதாப்பும்

In *pura.187:1*, the first and third **cīr** from the back are identical, yielding **polippu iyaipu**:

நாடா கொன்றே காடா கொன்றே



In *narr.24:6*, the first **eluttu** in the first and fourth **cīr** are identical, yielding **orūu mōṇai**:

சேறும் நாமெனச் சொல்லச் சேயிறை

In *pari.6:97*, the first **acai** in the first and fourth **cīr** are identical, yielding **orūu mōṇai**:

துனி நீங்கி யாட ரெடங்கு துனி நனி

In *narr.251:8*, the second **eluttu** in the first and fourth **cīr** are identical, yielding **orūu etukai**:

பலி பெறு கடவுட் பேணிக் கவி சிறந்து

In *narr.344:5*, the last **eluttu** in the first and fourth **cīr** are identical, yielding **orūu iyaipu**:

நம்நிலை இடைதெரிந்து உணரான் தன்மலை

In *aka.18:9*, the last **acai** in the first and fourth **cīr** are identical, yielding **orūu iyaipu**:

ஒருநாள் விழுமம் உறினும் வழிநாள்

In *kali.101:1*, the first **eluttu** in the first three **cīr** are identical, yielding **kūlai mōṇai**:

தளிபெறு தண்புலத்துத் தலைப்பெயற் கரும்பீன்று

In *pari.12:101*, the first three **cīr** are identical, yielding **kūlai mōṇai**:

நன்பல நன்பல நன்பல வையை

In *malai:567*, the second **eluttu** in the first three **cīr** are identical, yielding **kūlai etukai**:

செல் வேந் தில் லவெந் தொல் பதிப் பெயர்ந்தென

In *pari.6:46*, the last **eluttu** in the first three **cīr** from the back yield **kūlai iyaipu**:

மாறுமென் மலரும் தாரும் கிழங்கும்

In *pari.10:98*, the first three **cīr** from the back are identical, yielding **kūlai iyaipu**:

அரந்தின்வாய் போன்ம் போன்ம் போன்ம்

In *kali.78:2*, the first **eluttu** in the first, second, and fourth **cīr** are identical, yielding **kīlkkatuvāy mōṇai**:

இன்மலர் இமிற்புதுந் துண்புணர் இருந்தும்பி

In *cīru.64*, the second **eluttu** in the first, second, and fourth **cīr** are identical, yielding **kīlkkatuvāy etukai**:

மண்மாறு கொண்ட மாலை வெண்குடை

In *kuṛi.130*, the last **eluttu** in the first, second, and fourth **cīr** from the back are identical, yielding **kīlkkatuvāy iyaipu**:

உரவுச்சினம் செருக்கித் துன்னுதொறும் வெகுளும்

In *kali.38:16*, the first **eluttu** in the first, third, and fourth **cīr** are identical, yielding **mēṛkatuvāy mōṇai**:

அருள்வல்லான் ஆக்கம்போல் அணிபெறும் அவ்வணி

In *kuṛi.77*, the second **eluttu** in the first, third, and fourth **cīr** are identical, yielding **mēṛkatuvāy etukai**:

தில்லை பாலை கல்லிவர் முல்லை

In *pari.4:67*, the last *eḷuttu* in the first, third, and fourth *cīr* from the back yield *mēṛkatuvāy iyaipu*:

ஆலமும் கடம்பும் நல்யாற்று நடுவும்

In *aka.44:11*, the first *eḷuttu* in all the four *cīr* are identical yielding *murru mōṇai*:

பருந்துபடப் பண்ணிப் பழையன் பட்டெனக்

In *pari.15:10*, the second *eḷuttu* in all the four *cīr* are identical yielding *murru etukai*:

குலவரை சிலவே குலவரை சிலவினும்

In *pari.3:78*, the last *eḷuttu* in all the four *cīr* are identical yielding *murru iyaipu*:

இரண்டென முன்றென நான்கென வைந்தென

In *pari.3:83*, the last *acai* in all the four *cīr* are identical yielding *murru iyaipu*:

இடவல குடவல கோவல காவல

In *aka.8:10-11*, only the initial consonants in subsequent lines are identical, yielding *varukka mōṇai*:

படுகடுங் களிற்றின் வருத்தஞ் சொலிய

பிடிபடி முருக்கிய பெருமரப் பூசல்

In *kuru.33:3-4*, the first vowels in subsequent lines are identical, yielding *vali mōṇai*:

இரந்தா ணிரம்பா மேனியொடு *irantū ṇirampā mēṇiyoṭu*

விருந்தி னாரும் பெருஞ்செம் மலனே *viruntī nūrum peruñcem malanē*

In *neṭu:39-40*, the vowels that follow the initial consonants in subsequent lines are identical, yielding **vali mōṇai**:

வெள்ளி வள்ளி விளங்கிறைப் பணத்தோள் *velli valli viḷaṅkiraip paṇaittōḷ*  
செவ்வி யரும்பின் பைங்காற் பித்திகத்து *cevvī yarumpiṇ painkāṛ pittikattu*

In *pati.61:11-12*, the initial vowels form a class, yielding **anu mōṇai**:

இரக்கு வாரே னெஞ்சிக் கூறேன் *irakku vārē neñcik kūṛēṇ*  
ஈத்த திரங்கா னீத்தொறு மகிழான் *ītta tiraṅkā ṇīttoru makilāṇ*

In *pati.61:17-18*, the initial consonants form a class, yielding **anu mōṇai**:

முழவிற் போக்கிய வெண்கை *muḻaviṛ pōkkiya veṇkai*  
விழவி னன்னநின் கலிமகிழானே *viḻavi ṇannaniṇ kalimaki ḷāṇē*

In *matu:1-2*, there is **vali mōṇai** as well as **anu mōṇai**:

ஓங்குதிரை வியன்பரப்பி *ōṅkutirai viyaṇparappi*  
ஔலிமுநநீர் வரம்பாக *ṇolimunnīr varampāka*

In *aka.41:9-10*, there is **neṭil mōṇai**:

காடணி கொண்ட காண்டகு பொழுதின் *kāṭaṇi koṇṭa kāṇṭaku poḻutiṇ*  
நாம்பிரி புலம்பின் நலஞ்செலச் சாஅய் *nāmpiri pulampiṇ nalañcelac cāay*

In *aka.42:5-6*, there is **neṭil mōṇai**:

நாடுவறங் கூர நாஞ்சில் துஞ்சக் *nāṭuvaṇaṅ kūra nāñcil tuñcak*  
கோடை நீடிய பைதறு காலக் *kōṭai nīṭiya paitaṛu kālaik*

In *kuṟu.384:1-2*, the vowel in the second **eluttu** are identical, yielding **uyir etukai**:

உறுந்துடைக் கழுந்திற் கரும்புடைப் பணத்தோள் *uḷuntuṭaik kaḷuntir karumpuṭaip*  
paṇaittōḷ

நெடும்பல் கூந்தற் குறுந்தொடி மகளிர் *neṭumpal kūntaṛ kuṛuntoṭi makaḷir*

In *kuru.33:3-4*, the second *eḷuttu* contain the same consonant but different vowels, yielding *varukka etukai*:

இரந்து ணிரம்பா மேனியொடு *irantū ṇirampā mēṇiyōṭu*  
 விருந்தி னூரும் பெருஞ்செம் மலனே *viruntī nūrum peruñcem malanē*

In *kuru.121:3-4*, the second *eḷuttu* belong to the hard class (*val inam*), yielding *vallina etukai*:

ஆற்றப் பாயாத் தப்ப லேற்ற  
 கோட்டொடு போகி யாங்கு நாடன்

In *kuru.292:4-5*, the second *eḷuttu* belong to the soft class (*mel inam*), yielding *mellina etukai*:

பொன்செய் பாவை கொடுப்பவுங் கொள்ளான்  
 பெண்கொலை புரிந்த நன்னன் போல

In *aka.26:3-4*, the second *eḷuttu* belong to the middle class (*iṭai inam*), yielding *iṭaiyina etukai*:

பொய்தல் மகளிர் விழுவணிக் கூட்டும்  
 அவ்வயின் நண்ணிய வளங்கே ழுரனைப்

In *pari.19:61-62*, there is *aḷapeṭai-t-toṭai*:

ஏள யோஒ வெனவிளி யேற்பிக்க  
 ஏள யோஒவென் றேலா வவ்விளி

In *aka.18:3-5*, there is *aḷapeṭai-t-toṭai*:

கராஅந் துஞ்சங் கல்லுயர் மறிசுழி  
 மராஅ யானை மதந்தப ஒற்றி  
 உராஅ ஈர்க்கும் உட்குவரு நீத்தங்

An example of **centotai** is *aka.73:13-14*.

மடிபதம் பார்க்கும் வயமான் துப்பின்  
ஏனலஞ் சிறுதினைச் சேனோன் கையதைப்

Sub-categorization of “Stringing” Based on Meaning (**muraṇ totai**)

The mode of contrasting is called **muraṇ** ‘to oppose, contrast.’ The contrast or opposition basically exists between words referring to contrasting ideas. Since words refer to different qualities or things in a language, contrast/opposition is also accomplished in more than one way. The variations in the usage of such words result in different types of **muraṇ** in this tradition. The contrasting words need not bear a phonological similarity and may be placed in the same line or in different lines.

Words which basically refer to contrasting qualities produce a contrast which is identified as a contrast by words (**col muraṇ**). The contrasting qualities may modify the same type of things or refer to totally different things. Words which stand for or refer to things which happen to have contrasting qualities are said to bring about a contrast by referents (**poruḷ muraṇ**). Words which stand for contrasting qualities and modify different things trigger a contrast by word (**col**) and referent (**poruḷ**). Examples are provided next with the contrasting items given in bold type.

Contrast by words (**col muraṇ**)

குடபுல ங் காவலர் மருமா னென்றார் **western land**  
வடபுல விமயத்து வாங்குவிற் பொறித்த **northern land** (*ciru:47-48*)

குறியா இன்பம் எளிதின் நின்மலைப் **unintended pleasure**  
பல்வேறு விலங்கும் எய்து நாட  
குறித்த இன்பம் நினக்கெவன் அரிய **intended pleasure** (*aka.2:8, 10*)

சேய்த்தும் அன்று சிறிதுநணி யதுவே **distance; closeness** (*ciru.201*)  
 Here, the same place is talked about as not being **faraway** but being **close**.

வாழை யோங்கிய தாழ்கண் அசம்பில் **standing tall; low land** (*aka.8:9*)  
 Here, the banana tree (வாழை) is **standing tall**, while the ditch (அசம்பு) is **low**.

முதுவோர் க்கு முகிழ்த்த கையினை யெனவும் **elders**  
 இளையோர் க்கு மலர்ந்த மார்பினை யெனவும் **youngsters** (*ciru.231-232*)

Contrast by referents (**poruḷ muran**)

நீரோ ரன்ன சாயல் **water**  
 தீயோ ரன்னவென் னுரனவித்தன்றே **fire** (*kuru.95:4-5*)

அற்றை த் திங்க எவ்வெண் ணிலவின் **that day**  
 எந்தையு முடையேமெங் குன்றும் பிறர்கொளார்  
 இற்றை த் திங்க எவ்வெண் ணிலவின் **this day** (*pura.112:1, 3*)

இன்னு தம்மவிவ் வுலகம் **not pleasant, cruel**  
 இனிய காண்கித னியல்புணர்ந்தோரே **pleasant, sweet** (*pura.194:6-7*)

Contrast by word (**col**) and referent (**poruḷ**)

சிறுவீ முல்லைக்குப் பெருந்தேர் நல்கிய **small flowers; big chariot**  
 புலவுக்கய லெடுத்த பொன்வாய் மணிச்சிரல் **golden beak; blue bird**  
 (*ciru.89, 181*)

இரு பேர் யாற்ற ஒரு பெருங் கூடல் two big rivers; one big confluence  
(*pura.273:5*)

### Certain Modes of Employing *toṭai*

The *iraiṭṭai* and *niral-nirai* are two specific modes of employing the various types of *toṭai* discussed above. Among them, the *iraiṭṭai* is simpler. It is supposed to allow the same word to recur four times so as to compose the four feet (*cīr*) in a line, but there is no such line in classical Tamil poems. The maximum number of times the same word occurs in these poems is three: நன்பல நன்பல நன்பல கவைய (*pari.12:101*); அரந்தின்வாய் போன்ம் போன்ம் போன்ம் (*pari.10:98*).<sup>127</sup>

The *niral-nirai* mode refers to employing a given *toṭai* in a particular order. One of the ways it is done is first to string a group of items (e.g., A, B) in a row and then another group of items in a row (e.g., C, D), where each item in the first group is semantically connected to an item in the second group. The way these items are connected depends upon the order in which they are presented within their respective group. Thus, A is connected to C, whereas B is connected to D. The simplest example is இரதி காமன் இவள் இவன் 'Rati, Kāmaṇ, she, he' (*pari.19:48*). This line means 'She is Rati. He is Kāmaṇ.' Item A is 'Rati'; B is 'Kāmaṇ'; C is 'she'; D is 'he.' There can be a maximum of four items in each of these groups, but the number of items in the second group is either equal to or half of the number of items in the first group. An example is *pari.13:44-45*.

வலம்புரி வாய்மொழி அதிர்வுவான்முழுக்குச் செல்  
'Valampuri conch, the Vedas, trembling roar of the sky, thunder'

<sup>127</sup> Commentators give the following examples: ஒக்குமே ஒக்குமே ஒக்குமே ஒக்கும்;  
பாடுகோ பாடுகோ பாடுகோ பாடுகோ (cf. *Tolkāppiyam*, *poruḷatikāram*, Pē:245, cey.403).



அவை நான்கும் உறழும் அருள் செறல் வயின் மொழி

‘resembling those four (are) your words of compassion and destruction’

Here, the four items presented first are the sound of the **valampuri** conch (வலம்புரி), the chanting of the Vedas (வாய்மொழி), the roaring of the sky (அதிர்வுவான்முழுக்கு), and thunder (செல்). And they are perceived as resembling, respectively, Vishnu’s compassionate gracious words (அருள் வயின் மொழி) and harsh words of destruction (செறல் வயின் மொழி). Notice that the first group contains four items whereas the second has only two.

Another way of using the **niral-nirai** mode is to present a given **totai** in what can be called a “parallel construction.” As an example, consider *ciru:164-167*.

பைந்தனை அவரை பவழம் கோப்பவும்

‘as the **avarai** with fresh buds strings (its buds) like coral’

கருநனைக் காயாக் கணமயில் அவிழவும்

‘as the **kāyā** with black/dark buds unfold like a flock of peacocks’

கொழுங்கொடி முசண்டை கொட்டம் கொள்ளவும்

‘as the fat **mucuṇṭai** vine puts out pit-like flowers’

செழுங்குலைக் காந்தள் கைவிரல் பூப்பவும்

‘as the **kānta**], with rich bunches, blooms like fingers’

Here, the first line contains an idea which recurs in a similar structural fashion in the succeeding few lines. This kind of structure is here called a “parallel construction.” The recurring idea is the comparison between a

flowering plant and something else. As for the type of *toṭai* in this *niral-nirai* mode, note that the last syllable in each line triggers the *iyaipu*-alliteration.

### **vaṇṇam** (rhythmic variation)

The term **vaṇṇam** ‘beauty, color’ refers to the variation in rhythm (*canta vērupāṭu*). The tradition has identified twenty such variations. A commentator notes that these are components (*uruppu*) of a composition (*ceyyuḷ*). Therefore, it is not necessary for the entire composition to produce a given **vaṇṇam**. By the same token, it is possible to have more than one **vaṇṇam** in a given composition.<sup>128</sup>

### **pāa vaṇṇam**

The first one, **pāa vaṇṇam**, is the **vaṇṇam** proper to a grammatical verse (*nūrpā*). It is obtained when a word (*col*) makes up a foot (*cir*) and is used extensively in a treatise (*nūl*). Here, the metrical feet in a line (*aṭi*) are involved in a reckoning, as if in an exposition.<sup>129</sup> It is found occasionally in poetry. Examples are *aka.36:15* and *pati.14:1* where the items are involved in a reckoning: சேரல் செம்பியன் சினங்கெழு திதியன் ‘(The chieftains known as the) Cēral, Cempiyan, and the furious Titiyan’; நிலநீர் வளிவிசம் பென்ற நான்கின் ‘like the four, namely the earth, the water, the wind, and the sky.’

<sup>128</sup> Pē:419, cey.527.

<sup>129</sup> ḷam:540, cey.515; Pē:418, cey.526.

### tāa vaṇṇam

The vaṇṇam known as the **tāa vaṇṇam** is obtained when there is **etukai** alliteration in alternate metrical feet in the same line.<sup>130</sup> Another convention is to consider the **etukai** in the first metrical foot of alternate lines as producing the **tāa vaṇṇam**.<sup>131</sup> These alliterations are otherwise known as **polippu etukai**, **orūu etukai**, and **aṭi iṭai iṭṭa etukai**. Examples were treated above.

### vallicai vaṇṇam, mellicai vaṇṇam, and iyaipu vaṇṇam

The **vallicai vaṇṇam** employs numerous hard consonants (**val eluttu**), while **mellicai vaṇṇam** and **iyaipu vaṇṇam** are produced respectively by soft consonants (**mel eluttu**) and middle consonants (**iṭai eluttu**). Examples:

In *paṭṭ:218*, **vallicai vaṇṇam** is employed:

முட்டாச் சிறப்பி ன் பட்டினம் பெறினும்

Another example is *tiru:73*. முட்டாட் டாமரைத் துஞ்சி

In *narr.166:1-2*, **mellicai vaṇṇam** occurs:

பொன்னும் மணியும் போலும் யாழநின்

நன்னர் மேனியும் நாறிருங் கதுப்பும்

In *aka.36:3*, **iyaipu vaṇṇam** appears:

ஆம்பல் மெல்ல டை கிழியக் குவளைக்

---

<sup>130</sup> Pē:419, cey.527.

<sup>131</sup> Iḷam:540, cey.516.

**alapeṭai vaṇṇam, neṭuñcīr vaṇṇam, cittira vaṇṇam, nalipu vaṇṇam, and miṟai-k-kavi**

The **alapeṭai vaṇṇam** is obtained by using many elongated vowels (**uyir alapeṭai**) or elongated consonants (**orru alapeṭai**). The **neṭuñcīr vaṇṇam** is produced by long vowels (**neṭṭeluttu**), while **kuṟuñcīr vaṇṇam** is generated by the short vowels (**kuṟṟeluttu**). If there is an equal mixture of long and short vowels by alternation, then there is **cittira vaṇṇam**. The **nalipu vaṇṇam** is produced by the **āytam** (ஹ).

One commentator notes that it would be “unpleasant” (**innātu**) to use just one class or one type of letters (**eḷuttu**) in the whole composition which would then be called “an excessive poem” (**miṟai-k-kavi**).<sup>132</sup> Examples:

In *aka.99:8*, **alapeṭai vaṇṇam** is created by elongated vowels:

மராஅ மலரொடு விராஅய்ப் பராஅம்

In *malai:352*, **alapeṭai vaṇṇam** is created by elongated consonants:

கண்ண் தண்ண் னெனக் கண்டும் கேட்டும்

In *pura.273:1*, **neṭuñcīr vaṇṇam** is created by long letters:

மாவா ராதே மாவா ராதே māṁvā rātē māṁvā rātē

In *aka.98:4*, **kuṟuñcīr vaṇṇam** is created by short letters:

முனிதக நிறுத்த நல்கல் எவ்வம் muṇitaka niṟutta nalkal evvam

<sup>132</sup> Pē:420, cey.529. It makes one wonder whether one of the most appreciated verses (“pañciyoḷir viñcukulir pallavama nuṅka ...”) in Kampan’s *Irāmāvatāram*, would have been disapproved as a **miṟai-k-kavi** by earlier poets because of employing many nasals.

In *aka.61:1, 14*, **neṭuñcīr vaṇṇam** is generated by a mix of long and short letters:

நோற்றோர் மன்ற தாமே கூற்றம் nōṟṟōr manṇa tāme kūṟṟam  
பழகுவ ராதலோ அரிதே முனாது paḷakuva rātalō aritē munāatu

Classical Tamil poems do not have examples of **nalipu vaṇṇam**. An example is given from a later text, *tirukkural:178*

அஃ காமை செல்வத்துக் கியாதெனின் வெஃ காமை  
aḥāmai celvattuk kiyāteṇiṇ veḥāmai

**akappāṭṭu vaṇṇam** and **purappāṭṭu vaṇṇam**

The **akappāṭṭu vaṇṇam** exists when the last line in a composition gives the impression of not having ended the subject matter, but in fact, has. The opposite happens to produce the **purappāṭṭu vaṇṇam**: when a line gives the impression of having ended the subject matter, but in fact has not. Note that with a few exceptions, the last line in a composition in this period normally ends with the vowel ē. In *aiṅkurunūru* the last line in some verses (21-30; 211-220) ends with the letter ய், generating the **akappāṭṭu vaṇṇam**. An example is *aiṅk.219:4*: ஒண்ணுதல் பசப்ப தெவன்கொ லன்கு ய். Similarly, in *aka.46:16*, the last line ends with ௌ: சென்றி பெருமநின் தகைக்குநர் யாரோ. In *kuruntokai* 23, the third line ends like the last, but does not end the poem. It produces the **purappāṭṭu vaṇṇam**:

அகவன் மகளே அகவன் மகளே  
மனவுக் கோப்பன்ன நன்னெடுங் கூந்தல்  
அகவன் மகளே பாடுக பாட்டே  
இன்னும் பாடுக பாட்டே அவர்  
நன்னெடுங் குன்றம் பாடிய பாட்டே

### oluku vaṇṇam, orūu vaṇṇam, and eṇṇu vaṇṇam

The **oluku vaṇṇam** is obtained when the lines in a composition produce an uninterrupted sound (*ōcai*) and present the subject matter in the order in which they are composed. When the subject matter is not spread across the lines but is compactly presented in each line, the **vaṇṇam** receives the name **orūu vaṇṇam**. If there is reckoning within a line, it is called **eṇṇu vaṇṇam**.

In *kuruntokai* 136, the subject matter flows through the end producing the **oluku vaṇṇam**:

காமம் காமம் என்ப காமம்  
அணங்கும் பிணியு மன்றே நுணங்கிக்  
கடுத்தலுந் தணிதலு மின்றே யானே  
குளகுமென் றுண்மதம் போலப்  
பாணியு முடைத்தது காணுநர்ப் பெறினே

In *kuruntokai* 97, the subject matter is compact in lines 1, 3, and 4, producing the **orūu vaṇṇam**:

யானே ஈண்டை யேனே யென்னலனே  
ஆளு நோயொடு கான லஃதே  
துறைவன் றும்மு ரானே  
மறையல ராகி மன்றத்தஃதே

Also in *ainkurunūru* 423, the **orūu vaṇṇam** is created:

மாமழை யிடியுத் தளிசொரிந் தன்றே  
வாணுதல் பசப்பச் செலவயர்ந் தனையே  
யாமே நிறுறுந் தமையலம்  
ஆய்மல ருண்கணு நீர் நிறைந் தனவே

In *kuriñcippāṭṭu*:77, the **enṇu vaṇṇam** is produced by reckoning:

தில்லை பாலை கல்லிவர் முல்லை

### **akaippu vaṇṇam and tūṅkal vaṇṇam**

The **akaippu vaṇṇam** is the effect produced when short and long vowels are not equally spread. The **tūṅkal vaṇṇam** is obtained by using metrical feet with three **acai** in an alternating manner, to produce the sound called **tūṅkal ōcai**. This process takes place in longer poetry, like a compilation known as **toṭar nilaia ceyyuḷ** which focus on particular themes.<sup>133</sup> According to another opinion, the **tūṅkal vaṇṇam** is obtained by using **vañci uriccīr**.<sup>134</sup> Examples:

In *куру.110:1-2*, short and long vowels do not alternate but are unevenly spread, producing **akaippu vaṇṇam**:

வாரா ராயினும் வரினு மவர்நமக்

கியாரா கியரோ தோழி நீர

In *kali.70:15*, **akaippu vaṇṇam** is produced:

வாராய்நீ துறத்தலின் வருந்திய எமக்காங்கே

In *muttolāyiram 104:1-2*, which is a later text, the **tūṅkal vaṇṇam** is employed:

யானுடத் தானுணர்த்த யானுணரா விட்டபின்

றனுட யானுணர்த்தத் தானுணரான் தேனுடும்

<sup>133</sup> Pē:424, cey.542.

<sup>134</sup> Iḷam: 545, cey.531.

In *paṭṭi*:1-2, the **tūṅkal vaṇṇam** is produced by **vañci uricciṛ**:

வசையில்புகழ் வயங்குவெண்மீன்  
திசைதிரிந்து தெற்கேகினும்

**ēntal vaṇṇam**, **uruṭṭu vaṇṇam**, **kuṟuñciṛ vaṇṇam**, and **muṭuku vaṇṇam**

If the same word is repeated in a line in order to emphasize what is said, there is **ēntal vaṇṇam**. The **vaṇṇam** called **uruṭṭu vaṇṇam** employs the technique of **arākam**: it has a rolling sound (**uruṇṭa ōcai**), unlike the **kuṟuñciṛ vaṇṇam** which has a mellifluous sound (**nekiṭta ōcai**). From the examples provided by the commentators, it seems like a sound produced by the letters **ṇ** and **ḷ** without long vowels. The last **vaṇṇam** is **muṭuku vaṇṇam**. It is similar to **uruṭṭu vaṇṇam** except that it crosses the boundary of a line with four metrical feet (**nārciṛ aṭi**). The line has more than four feet. It has also been suggested that the line producing the **muṭuku vaṇṇam** is followed by a line with a different structure.<sup>135</sup> Examples:

In *pari*.10:98, **ēntal vaṇṇam** is produced by repetition of the same word:  
அரந்தின்வாய் போன்ம் போன்ம் போன்ம்

In *pari*.12:101 also, **ēntal vaṇṇam** is produced by repetition of the same word:

தன்பல தன்பல தன்பல கவைய

In *aka*.158:1, **uruṭṭu vaṇṇam/arāka vaṇṇam** is produced:

உருமுரறு கருவிய பெருமழை தலைஇய

<sup>135</sup> Nacc:264, cey.233.



In *kali.33:10*, *uruṭṭu vaṇṇam/arāka vaṇṇam* is produced:

எரியுரு உறழ இலவ மலர

Another example provided by the commentators:

உருகெழு முருகிய முருமென வதிந்தொறு

மருகெழு சிறகொடு மணவரு மணிமயில்

In *kali.39:46*, *muṭuku vaṇṇam* is produced:

நெறியறி செறிகுறி புரிதிரி பறியா அறிவனை முந்துநீஇத்

In *kali.104:39-40*, *muṭuku vaṇṇam* is created:

இரிபெழு பதிர்பதிர் பிகந்துடன் பலர்நீங்க

வரிபரி பிறுபிறுபு குடர்சோரக் குத்தித்தன்

**māṭṭu** (fastening, wrapping)

This term literally means ‘fastening.’ In Tamil prosody, it refers to the technique of properly joining the words, which are separated by many other words occurring between them in a composition, so as to bring coherence to the subject matter of the composition. For example, in *akanāṇūru* 9, the words *eṇ neñcē* (‘my heart’), which occur as the last two items in the poem, have to be joined with *pōki* (‘going; having gone’), *eṇātu* (‘without thinking’), *eyti* (‘reaching; having reached’), *kuṟuki* (‘getting closer’), *tīṇṭi* (‘touching; having touched’), and *tōyntanru kollō* (‘whether it immersed?’), which are spread across the lines in the poem. Many other words occur between all these words. The whole poem is analyzed in detail in the last chapter in this study, so only the relevant parts are reproduced here:

... ..

*kuṇru piṇ oḷiyap pōki* ... (line 14)

... .. ūr cēyt tenātu (line 15)

... ..

emmiṇum viraintuval eyti ... (line 17)

... ..

kaṇṇupuku mālai niṇṇōḷ eyti (line 20)

... .. kuruki (line 21)

... .. piṇṇakam tīṇṭi (line 22)

toṭikkai taivarat tōyntaṇṇu kollō (line 23)

... ..

meṇṇōḷ peṇanacaiic ceṇṇaven neñcē (line 26)

## Components of Subject Matter

The nineteen features relevant to the subject matter of a Tamil composition (ceyyuḷ) are nōkku, tiṇai, kaikōḷ, kūrṇu, kētpōr, kaḷaṇ, kālam, payaṇ, meyppātu, eccam, muṇṇam, poruḷ, tuṇai, ammai, aḷaku, tonmai, tōl, viruntu, and pulaṇ. Among them are conventions about aesthetic behavior (vaṇappu iyal) and are applicable to a compilation like an anthology or a long narrative poetry: ammai, aḷaku, tonmai, tōl, viruntu, iyaipu, pulaṇ, and ilaipu. They are discussed first.

## Conventions About the Aesthetic Behavior of Tamil Poetry

The feature **ammai** (< **amai** ‘to settle, be calm’) is so called because it reflects a contented or serene quality (**amaiti**). It is found in a didactic composition (**paṇuval**) which allows some exceptions by including non-didactic elements and is composed of a few gentle utterances (**moḷi**) and has a limited number of lines (maximum of five per poem).<sup>136</sup>

<sup>136</sup> The post-classical anthology known as the *patinēṇkīlkanakku* is a good example, for

The feature **aḷaku** ‘beauty’ is attained when one composes metrical feet (**cīr**) with words that are appropriate for a composition (**ceyyuḷ**).<sup>137</sup> **tonmai** ‘antiquity’ belongs to ancient things (**paḷaimai**) which are combined with exposition/commentary (**urai**).<sup>138</sup> The feature **tōl** is found in compositions that narrate something supreme in gentle words and in compositions that narrate something in elaborate words.<sup>139</sup> **viruntu** belongs to a composition (**yāppu**) that talks about something novel (**putuvatu**).<sup>140</sup> When a composition ends with certain vowelless consonants (**orru**: **ñ, ṇ, n, m, ṇ, y, r, l, v, ḷ, and ḷ**), the feature is **iyaipu**.<sup>141</sup> The feature is called **pulan** if one speaks perfectly without using words pertaining to specific residential neighborhoods (**cēri**) and the intent is revealed clearly without making the listener wonder about the meanings of those words.<sup>142</sup> If a composition flows in this manner without containing numerous hard consonants (**valleḷuttu**) that are doubled and has more evenly spread **kuṛaḷaṭi** (four to six letters) than other lines (**cintaṭi, aḷavaṭi, neṭilaṭi,**

---

and **kaḷavaḷi nārpatu**. Cf. *ḷam*:547, *cey*:536; *Nacc*:265-266, *cey*:235.

<sup>137</sup> E.g., classical Tamil anthologies. Cf. *Nacc*:266, *cey*:236.

<sup>138</sup> E.g., later works such as *peruntēvaṇār pāratam, takaṭūr yāttirai*, and *cilappatikāram*. Cf. *Nacc*:267, *cey*:237.

<sup>139</sup> E.g., *malaipaṭukaṭām*. Cf. *ḷam*:548, *cey*:539.

<sup>140</sup> E.g., post-classical poems such as the *muttoḷḷāyiram*, and later poems composed in the *antāti* and *kalampakam* genres. Cf. *Nacc*:268, *cey*:239; *Pē*:429, *cey*:551.

<sup>141</sup> E.g. post-classical poems such as the *maṇimēkalai* and *utayaṇaṇ katai*. Cf. *Nacc*:269, *cey*:240; *Pē*:430, *cey*:552.

<sup>142</sup> It seems that regional variations of the language are avoided in this type of composition. The example given by the commentators is a play by the name *viḷakkattār kūttu*. Cf. *Nacc*:269, *cey*:241; *Pē*:430, *cey*:553.

and **kaḷi neṭil aṭi**), and uses high sounding words (**ōṇkiya moḷi**, words with long vowels, soft consonants, and middle consonants), then the feature recognized is **īlaipu**.<sup>143</sup>

### Conventions About the Contents of Tamil Poetry

The components pertaining to the contents per se of classical Tamil poems are **nōkku**, **tiṇai**, **kaikōḷ**, **kūrṟu**, **kēṭpōr**, **kaḷaṇ**, **kālam**, **payan**, **meyppāṭu**, **eccam**, **muṇṇam**, **poruḷ**, and **tuṟai**. The component **nōkku** ‘gaze, perspective’ actually refers to two things: the skillful crafting of a composition in a manner that is appealing to the listener, and the art of understanding the intent of a composition.<sup>144</sup> The term **tiṇai** is generic and refers to poetic themes which are subsumed under two basic themes known as the **akam** ‘interior’ and the **puṟam** ‘exterior.’ The poetic conventions followed when composing a poem dealing with the themes of clandestine love (**kaḷavu**) and marital love (**karpu**) are referred to by the term **kaikōḷ** ‘taking up certain conducts.’ The term **kūrṟu** ‘proclamation, statement’ refers to the poetic conventions that are followed when the *dramatis personae* speak in a composition employing the **akam** theme. Similarly, the term **kēṭpōr** ‘listeners’ refers to the poetic conventions followed when creating the *dramatis personae* who are addressed by the speakers who make the **kūrṟu**. **kaḷaṇ** and **kālam** respectively refer to the context and time when the theme focused upon in a composition is supposed to have taken place. The result of the theme of the composition is denoted by the term **payan**

---

<sup>143</sup> Commentators say that this feature, **īlaipu**, is applicable to songs (**īcai-p-pāṭṭu**) and note that songs which are like the *kaḷi* and *paripāṭal* reflect this component. Cf. Nacc:270, cey.242; Pē:431, cey.554.

<sup>144</sup> The motivated reader must seek the pleasure of reading Pēraciriyar’s elegant and sophisticated discussion of *akanāṇūru* 4, to know what exactly the theoreticians of Tamil poetry mean by **nōkku** (Pē:279-282, cey.416).

‘yield.’ The component **meyp̄p̄ātu** ‘physical expression’ is the process of bringing out one’s inner emotions resulting in cloudy eyes, goose bumps, etc. According to one commentator, it is the technique that reveals in one’s physical appearance the fiery essence of the subject matter (**poruḷ p̄ilampu**) perceived through **nōkku**.<sup>145</sup> The technique of inferring what is implied by the statements made in a poem is called **eccam** ‘remainder.’ The term **munn̄am** ‘previous, before, in front of’ refers to the technique of making the subject matter understandable only through one’s knowledge of the poetic conventions. The component **poruḷ vakai** ‘kinds of subject matter’ refers to what is composed by a poet transcending the physical reality and the established conventions about the various **tiṇai**. On the other hand, **turai** ‘section, mode’ is the technique of conforming to the established conventions regarding the flora and fauna of the various **tiṇai**.

---

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Tolkāppiyam, *poruḷatikāram*, Nacc:250, cey.204.

## SCANNING A FEW POEMS

When scanning a classical Tamil poem, its core structural components and aesthetic aspects are evaluated first in order to know about the prosodic features of the poem. A discussion about the components relating to the poem's subject matter would be a subsequent concern. Here, some classical poems are scanned for understanding their prosody.

*kuruntokai* 122:

பைங்காற் கொக்கின் புன்புறத் தன்ன	பைங்-காற்   கொக்-கின்   புன்-புறத்   தன்-ன
painkāṇ kokkiṇ punpurat taṇṇa	nēr-nēr   nēr-nēr   nēr-nirai   nēr-nēr
குண்டு நீ ராம்பலுங் கூம்பின வினியே	குண்-டு-நீ   ராம்-பலுங்   கூம்-பின   வினி-யே
kuṇṭunī rāmpaluṅ kūmpina viṇiyē	nēṛpu-nēr   nēr-nirai   nēr-nirai   nirai-nēr
வந்தன்று வாழியோ மாலை	வத்-தன்று   வா-ழியோ   மா-லை
vantaṇṇu vāḷiyō mālai	nēr-nēṛpu   nēr-nirai   nēr-nēr
ஒருதா னன்றே கங்குலு முடைத்தே	ஒரு-தா   னன்-றே   கங்-குலு   முடைத்-தே
orutā ṇaṇṇē kaṅkulu muṭaittē	nirai-nēr   nēr-nēr   nēr-nirai   nirai-nēr

This poem is in the *ācīriyam* meter and has four lines (*aṭi*). All the lines except the penultimate have four metrical feet (*cīr*) each. They are called *nēraṭi* (ten to fourteen *eḷuttu*) or *aḷavaṭi* (four *cīr*). The penultimate line has three feet containing seven letters (*eḷuttu*), so is a *cintaṭi*. The lines in the poem contain *iyal acai* (*nēr* and *nirai*) and a *uri acai* (*nēṛpu*). All the feet are made up of two *acai*, and so are *īr-acai-c-cīr*. Two different metrical bindings — *ācīriya-t-taḷai* and *iyar cīr veṇ taḷai* — are employed in this poem. The metrical binding (*taḷai*) between the first three feet in the first line is *nēr onru ācīriya-t-taḷai*. The third and fourth feet in the first line produce *iyar cīr veṇ taḷai*. The second line has three different bindings. The binding between the first and second feet in this line is *nēr onru ācīriya-t-taḷai*, that between the second and third feet is *iyar cīr veṇ taḷai*, and that between the third and fourth feet is *nirai onru*

**āciriya-t-taḷai**. The feet in the third line produce **iyar cīr veṇ taḷai**. The binding between the first and second feet and similarly between the second and third feet in the last line is **nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai**. The third and fourth feet in this line produce **nirai onru āciriya-t-taḷai**.

The sound (**ōcai**) produced by the feet in this poem is an uninterrupted **akaval ōcai**. There would be four beats per line except in the penultimate which would have three. Each beat falls on the first part of the first **acai** of each foot. The extra-short **u** (**kurṛiyal ukaram**) in the **uriccīr** (**nērpū**) must not be stressed.

The first three lines contain the alliteration (**toṭai**) called **mellina etukai**, produced by the second **soft eḷuttu** in each line. The third line has what is known as **cīr vakai varukka mōnai** produced by the same consonant added to different vowels (**வ** and **வா**), occurring in different feet within a line. The last line has **polippu iyaipu** generated by the similarity between their last **eḷuttu**, which is **ē**, in the first and third feet **from the back**. All the letters participating in the alliteration process are marked in bold type.

Three types of **vaṇṇam** are produced here. The **cittira vaṇṇam** results from the mixture of short and long vowels. The **purappāṭṭu vaṇṇam** is produced by the second line which ends with the vowel **ē**, as if indicating the end of the poem but in fact it does not. The other **vaṇṇam** is the **oluku vaṇṇam**, which results from the uninterrupted flow of the subject matter (**poruḷ**) of the poem.

*kuruntokai 23:*

அகவன் மகளே யகவன் மகளே  
akavaṇ makaḷē akavaṇ makaḷē

அக-வன் | மக-ளே | யக-வன் | மக-ளே  
nirai-nēr | nirai-nēr | nirai-nēr | nirai-nēr

மனவுக்கோப் பன்ன நன்னெடுங் கூந்தல்  
maṇavukkōp panna nanṇeṭuṅ kūntal

மனவுக்-கோப் | பன்-ன | நன்-னெடுங் | கூந்-தல்  
niraipu-nēr | nēr-nēr | nēr-nirai | nēr-nēr

அகவன் மகளே பாடுக பாட்டே  
akavaṇ makalē pātuka pāṭṭē

அக-வன் | மக-ளே | பா-டுக | பாட்-டே  
nirai-nēr | nirai-nēr | nēr-nirai | nēr-nēr

இன்னும் பாடுக பாட்டே அவர்  
iṇṇum pātuka pāṭṭē avar

இன்-னும் | பா-டுக | பாட்-டே | அவர்  
nēr-nēr | nēr-nirai | nēr-nēr | nirai

நன்னெடுங் குன்றம் பாடிய பாட்டே

nanṇeṭuṅ kuṇṇam pāṭiya pāṭṭē நன்-னெடுங் | குன்-றம் | பா-டிய | பாட்-டே  
nēr-nirai | nēr-nēr | nēr-nirai | nēr-nēr

This poem also is in the **ācīriyam** meter and has five lines of equal length in the sense that they are composed of four feet each. The **iyal acai** (**nēr** and **nirai**) and a **uri acai** (**niraipu**) are used. All the feet except the last one in the penultimate line are made up of two **acai** each, and so are called **īr-acai-c-cīr**. The penultimate foot ends with an **ōr-acai-c-cīr**, a foot with one **acai**. It can be called a **taṇi-c-col** 'lone word' or a **vali-y-acai**, which stands separate from the rest of the line waiting to be joined with the next line for making sense. The penultimate line is an example of a **cor-cīr-aṭi**. All the lines except the penultimate are **nēraṭi** (ten to fourteen **eḷuttu**) or **aḷavaṭi** (four feet). The penultimate line, which contains only nine letters (**eḷuttu**), is not a **nēraṭi** by the earlier convention but would be one by the later convention which measures a line by the number of metrical feet of which it is composed of.

The metrical binding (**taḷai**) between the different feet in the first line is **iyarcīr veṇ taḷai**, so the line can be called an **iyarcīr vellāṭi**. The bindings in the second line are **nēr onru ācīriya-t-taḷai**, between the first three feet, and **iyarcīr veṇ taḷai** between the third and fourth feet. An



identical pattern of binding exists in the third line: **nēr onru āciriya-t-talai**, between the first three feet, and **iyarcīr veṇṇ talai** between the third and fourth feet. The binding between the first two feet in line four is **nēr onru āciriya-t-talai**, while the binding between the second and third is **iyarcīr veṇṇ talai**, which recurs between the third and fourth feet. The last line alternates between **iyarcīr veṇṇ talai** (first and second feet; third and fourth feet) and **nēr onru āciriya-t-talai** (second and third).

The sound produced by the feet is **akaval**. There would be four beats per line, and each beat would fall on the first part of the first **acai** in each foot. The penultimate line seems to provide the option of having just three beats, skipping a beat for its last **ōr-acai-c-cīr**. The short **u** (**murriyal ukaram**) in the **uriccīr** (**niraipu**) need not be stressed.

Several alliterations (**toṭai**) are produced in this poem. The letters making up the alliterations are marked in bold type. There is **polippu mōnai** in the first line, resulting from the first and third feet which are identical (அகவன்). The **polippu iyaipu** in this line derives from the first and third feet from the back (மகளே). There is **aṭi-iṭai-iṭṭa-mōnai** from the first feet in lines one and three (அகவன்), while an **aṭi-iṭai-iṭṭa-yaipu** results from the last feet in lines three and five (பாட்டே). The second **eḷuttu** in the first feet of the last two lines produce the **aṭi etukai**.

The first and third lines produce **cittira vaṇṇam** by mixing short and long vowels. Also, in line three, the last foot produces the **purappāṭṭu vaṇṇam**, because it provides a false sense of completion to the poem.

*puranānūru 11:*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. அரிமயிர்த் திரண்முன்கை<br>arimayirt tiraṇmunṅkai   | அரி-மயிர்த்   திரண் -முன்-கை<br>nirai-nirai   nirai-nēr-nēr  |
| 2. வாலிழை மடமங்கையர்<br>vāliḷai maṭamaṅkaiyar         | வா-லிழை   மட-மங்-கையர்<br>nēr-nirai   nirai-nēr-nirai        |
| 3. வரிமணற் புனைபாவைக்குக்<br>varimaṇar puṇaipāvaikkuk | வரி-மணற்   புனை-பா-வைக்குக்<br>nirai-nirai   nirai-nēr-nērpū |

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 4. குலவுச்சினைப் பூக்கொய்து<br>kulavuccinaip pūkkoytu         | குலவுச் -சினைப்   பூக்-கொய்து<br>niraipu-nirai   nēr-nērpū                   |
| 5. தண்பொருதைப் புனல்பாயும்<br>tanporunaip puṇalpāyum          | தண்-பொரு-தைப்   புனல்-பா-யும்<br>nēr-nirai-nēr   nirai-nēr-nēr               |
| 6. விண்பொருபுகழ் விறல்வஞ்சிப்<br>viṇporupukaḷ viralvañcip     | விண்-பொரு-புகழ்   விறல்-வஞ்-சிப்<br>nēr-nirai-nirai   nirai-nēr-nēr          |
| 7. பாடல்சான்ற விறல்வேந்தனும்மே<br>pāṭalcāṇra viralvēntaṇummē  | பா-டல்-சான்-ற   விறல்-வேந்-தனும்-மே<br>nēr-nēr-nēr-nēr   nirai-nēr-nirai-nēr |
| 8. வெப்புடைய வரண்கடந்து<br>veppuṭaiya varaṇkaṭantu            | வெப்-புடை-ய   வரண்-கடந்து<br>nēr-nirai-nēr   nirai-niraipu                   |
| 9. துப்புறுவர் புறம்பெற்றிசினே<br>tuppuṟuvar puramperricīṇē   | துப்-புறு-வர்   புறம்-பெற்-றிசி-னே<br>nēr-nirai-nēr   nirai-nēr-nirai-nēr    |
| 10. புறம்பெற்ற வயவேந்தன்<br>puramperra vayavēntaṇ             | புறம்-பெற்-ற   வய-வேந்-தன்<br>nirai-nēr-nēr   nirai-nēr-nēr                  |
| 11. மறம்பாடிய பாடினியும்மே<br>maṟampāṭiya pāṭiṇiyummē         | மறம்-பா-டிய   பா-டினி-யும்-மே<br>nirai-nēr-nirai   nēr-nirai-nēr-nēr         |
| 12. ஏருடைய விழுக்கழஞ்சிற்<br>ēruṭaiya viḷukkaḷaṇciṟ           | ஏ-ருடை-ய   விழுக்-கழஞ்-சிற்<br>nēr-nirai-nēr   nirai-nirai-nēr               |
| 13. சீருடைய விழைபெற்றிசினே<br>cīruṭaiya viḷaipeṛricīṇē        | சீ-ருடை-ய   விழை-பெற்-றிசி-னே<br>nēr-nirai-nēr   nirai-nēr-nirai-nēr         |
| 14. இழைபெற்ற பாடினிக்குக்<br>iḷaipeṛra pāṭiṇikkuk             | இழை-பெற்-ற   பா-டினிக்குக்<br>nirai-nēr-nēr   nēr-niraipu                    |
| 15. குரல்புணர்சீர்க் கொளவல்பாண்<br>kuralpuṇarcīrk koḷaivalpāṇ | குரல்-புணர்-சீர்க்   கொள-வல்-பாண்<br>nirai-nirai-nēr   nirai-nēr-nēr         |
| 16. மகனும்மே யெனவாங்<br>makaṇummē yeṇavāṅ                     | மக-னும்-மே   யென-வாங்<br>nirai-nēr-nēr   nirai-nēr                           |
| 17. கொள்ளுற் புரிந்த தாமரை<br>koḷḷaḷar purinta tāmarai        | கொள்-ளுற்   புரிந்-த   தா-மரை<br>nēr-nirai   nirai-nēr   nēr-nirai           |

18. வெள்ளி நாராற் பூப்பெற் றிசினே      வெள்-ளி |நா-ராற் |பூப்-பெற் |றிசி-னே  
 vellī nārār pūpper ṛiṇē      nēr-nēr | nēr-nēr | nēr-nēr | nirai-nēr

This is a poem which has to be scanned by the earlier convention which construes metrical feet (*cīr*) and lines (*aṭi*) in terms of the number of letters (*eḷuttu*) in them. Accordingly, this poem is mostly in the *vañci* meter and has eighteen lines. All the lines except the last two have two metrical feet each. Such a *vañci* poem is called a *nēr nilai vañci* or *cama nilai vañci*. The penultimate line has three feet and the last line has four feet, all made up of *iyarṇcīr*, so the poem ends in the *ācīriyam* meter.

The various *acai* here used are *nēr*, *nirai*, *nēpu*, and *niraipu*. The various *cīr* used are *iyarṇcīr*, *ācīriya uriccīr*, *veṇṇcīr*, and *vañci uriccīr*. Examples: அரிமயிர்த் (*nirai-nirai*), குலவுச்சினை (*niraipu-nirai*), திரண்முன்கை (*nirai-nēr-nēr*), and புனைபா-வைக்குக் (*nirai-nēr-nēpu*). There are five metrical feet, which may seem to have been made up of four *acai*, and they appear in alternate lines: பாடல்சான்ற and விறல்வேந்தனும்மே (line 7); புறம்பெற்றிசினே (line 9); பாடியும்மே (line 11); and விழைபெற்றிசினே (line 13). The later convention would, in fact, treat these feet as made up of four *acai* and call them *nāl-acai-c-cīr* or *potu-c-cīr*. The earlier convention would not consider them as four *acai-c-cīr*, because it understands them in terms of the number of letters (*eḷuttu*) they contain.

Every metrical foot here follows the rule that the maximum number of *eḷuttu* allowed is six per foot in a *vañci* line. Examples: வாலிழை has three *eḷuttu*; அரிமயிர்த் has four; மடமங்கையர் has five; and விறல்வேந்தனும்மே has six.

Every line also follows the rule that a *vañci* line can have a minimum of six and a maximum of twelve *eḷuttu*. Accordingly, the lines in this poem have a minimum of seven and a maximum of ten *eḷuttu*. The following lines have seven *eḷuttu* each: குலவுச்சினைப் பூக்கொய்து (line 4), இழைபெற்ற பாடினக்கு (line 14), and மகனும்மே வெனவாங் (line 16); the following lines have eight *eḷuttu* each: அரிமயிர்த் திரண்முன்கை (line 1), வாலிழை மடமங்கையர் (line 2), வரிமணற் புனைபாவைக்குக் (line 3),

தண்பொருதைப் புனல்பாயும் (line 5), வெப்புடைய வரண்கடந்து (line 8), and புறம்பெற்ற வயவேந்தன் (line 10); the following have nine *eḷuttu* each: விண்பொருபுகழ் விறல்வஞ்சிப் (line 6), ஏருடைய விழுக்கழஞ்சிற (line 12), and குரல்புணர்சீர்க் கொளவல்பாண் (line 15). Even the last two lines producing the *ācīriyam* meter have nine *eḷuttu* each. The following lines have ten *eḷuttu* each: பாடல்சான்ற விறல்வேந்தனும்மே (line 7), துப்புறுவர் புறம்பெற்றிசினே (line 9), மறம்பாடிய பாடியும்மே (line 11), and சீருடைய விகழ்பெற்றிசினே (line 13).

By the earlier convention, metrical binding (*taḷai*) between the various feet in a *vañci* line is not as relevant as is the type of the foot.<sup>1</sup>

The sound in a *vañcippā* is confined to each foot, and therefore has to be obtained that way. The sound is *tūṅkal ōcai* 'suspended sound, slowly swaying sound.' One can say that the *tūṅkal ōcai* is confined between two consecutive beats. In this poem, the penultimate line has three beats and the last line has four, each beat falling on the first part of the first *acai* of each foot. All other lines could have either two or four beats. If there are two beats, each would fall on the first part of the first *acai* of each foot and the time measure (*layam*) has to be slow, as would be in the case of a foot having four *eḷuttu* (அரிமயிந்த) as opposed to the one having six (விறல்வேந்தனும்மே). If the lines have to have four beats, the beat would fall on the first part of the first *acai* and the latter part of the second *acai*, when the foot has less than six *eḷuttu*. If the foot has six *eḷuttu* (விறல்வேந்தனும்மே), the beat would fall on the first part of the first *acai* as well as on the first part of the third *acai*. The extra-short *u* (*kurriyal ukaram*) at the end of a *uriccīr* (*nērpū* or *niraipu*) must not be stressed. The other kind of short *u* (*murriyal ukaram*) at the end of a *uriccīr* (*nērpū* or *niraipu*) need not be stressed.

<sup>1</sup> Pē:205, cey.367.

Here the poem is given with the places where the beats could fall marked in bold type:

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. அரிமயிர் த்   திரண்முன்கை            | அரிமயிர் த்   திரண்முன்கை           |
| 2. வா லிழை   மடமங்கையர்                 | வா லிழை   மடமங்கையர்                |
| 3. வரிமணற்புனை   பாவைக்குக்             | வரிமணற் புனை   பாவைக் குக்          |
| 4. கு லவுச்சினைப்   பூக்கொய்து          | கு லவுச்சினைப்   பூக்கொய்து         |
| 5. தண்பொருதைப்   புனல்பாயும்            | தண்பொருதைப்   புனல் பாயும்          |
| 6. விண்பொருபுகழ்   விறல்வஞ்சிப்         | விண்பொருபுகழ்   விறல்வ ஞ்சி         |
| 7. பாடல்சான்ற   விறல்வேந்தனும்மே        | பாடல் சான்ற   விறல்வேத் தனும்மே     |
| 8. வெப்புடைய   வரண்கடந்து               | வெப்புடைய   வரண்கடந்து              |
| 9. துப்புறுவர்   புறம்பெற்றிசினே        | துப்புறுவர்   புறம்பெற்றிசினே       |
| 10. புறம்பெற்ற   வயவேந்தன்              | புறம்பெற்ற   வயவேந்தன்              |
| 11. மறம்பாடிய   பாடினியும்மே            | மறம்பாடிய   பாடினியும்மே            |
| 12. ஏருடைய   விழுக்கழஞ்சிற்             | ஏருடைய   விழுக்கழஞ் சிற்            |
| 13. சீ ருடைய   விழைபெற்றிசினே           | சீ ருடைய   விழைபெற்றிசினே           |
| 14. இழைபெற்ற   பாடினிக்குக்             | இழைபெற்ற   பாடினிக்குக்             |
| 15. குரல்புணர்சீர்க்   கொளவல்பாண்       | குரல்புணர் சீர்க்   கொளவல் பாண்     |
| 16. மகனும்மே   யெனவாங்                  | மகனும்மே   யெனவாங்                  |
| 17. கொள்ளுற்   புரிந்த தாமரை            | கொள்ளுற்   புரிந்த   தாமரை          |
| 18. வெள்ளி   நாராற்   பூப்பெற்   றிசினே | வெள்ளி   நாராற்   பூப்பெற்   றிசினே |

The following are the alliterations (toṭai):

- varukka mōṇai in lines 2 and 3 — வா லிழை ; வரிமணற்  
 iṇai mōṇai in line 6 — விண்பொருபுகழ் விறல்வஞ்சி  
 vaḷi mōṇai in lines 9 and 10 — துப்புறுவர் ; புறம்பெற்ற  
 neṭil mōṇai in lines 12 and 13 — ஏருடைய ; சீ ருடைய  
 cīr vakai varukka etukai in line 1 — அரிமயிர் த் திரண்முன்கை  
 aṭi etukai in lines 5 and 6 — தண் பொருதைப் ; விண் பொருபுகழ்  
 aṭi etukai in lines 8 and 9 — வெப்புடைய ; துப்புறுவர்

aṭi etukai in lines 10 and 11 — புறம் பெற்ற; மறம் பாடிய  
 aṭi etukai in lines 16 and 17 — கொள்ளுல் ; வெள்ளி  
 talai āku etukai in lines 12 and 13 — ஒருடைய ; சீருடைய  
 iṭai-iṭṭa-etukai in lines 1 and 3 — அரிமயிர்; வரிமணற்  
 aṭi iyaipu in lines 3 and 4 — புனைபாவைக்குக் ; பூக்கொய்து

The **vaṇṇam** are: vallicai vaṇṇam in line 9; kuṟuñcīr vaṇṇam in line 1; cittira vaṇṇam in line 7; purappāṭṭu vaṇṇam in lines 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15; akaippu vaṇṇam in line 17.

*puranāṇūru 4:*

1. வாள் வலந்தர மறுப்பட்டன வாள் |வலந்-தர |மறுப்-பட்-டன  
 vāḷ valantara maruppattāṇa nēr |nirai-nirai |nirai-nēr-nirai
2. செவ்வானத்து வனப்புப்போன்றன செவ்-வா-னத்து |வனப்புப்-போன்-றன  
 cevvaṇṇattu vaṇappuppōṇṇa nēr-nēr-nēru |niraipu-nēr-nirai
3. தாள் களங்கொளக் கழல்பறைந்தன தாள் |களங்-கொளக் |கழல் -பறைந்-தன  
 tāḷ kaḷaṅkolak kaḷalparaintaṇa nēr |nirai-nirai |nirai-nirai-nirai
4. கொல்லேற்றின் மருப்புப்போன்றன கொல்ல் -லேற்-றின் |மருப்புப்-போன்-றன  
 koll lēṟṟiṇ maruppuppōṇṇa nēr-nēr-nēr |niraipu-nēr-nirai
5. தோல் துவைத்தம்பிற் றுளைதோன்றுவ தோல் |துவைத்-தம்-பிற் |றுளை-தோன்-றுவ  
 tōl tuvaitampir ruḷaitōṇṇuva nēr |nirai-nēr-nēr |nirai-nēr-nirai
6. நிலக்கொராஅ விலக்கம்போன்றன நிலக் -கொரா-அ |விலக் -கம்-போன்-றன  
 nilaikkorāa vilakkampōṇṇa nirai-nirai-nēr |nirai-nēr-nēr-nirai
7. மாவே எறிபதத்தா னிடங்காட்டக் மாவே |எறி-பதத்-தா |னிடங்-காட்-டக்  
 māvē eṟipattattā ṇiṭaṅkāṭṭak nēr-nēr |nirai-nirai-nēr |nirai-nēr-nēr

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 8. கறுழ்பொருத செவ்வாயான்<br>karuḷporuta cevvaṅyān                  | கறுழ்-பொரு-த   செவ்-வா-யான்<br>nirai-nirai-nēr   nēr-nēr-nēr                            |
| 9. எருத்துவவ்விய புலிபோன்றன<br>eruttuvavviya pulipōṇṇaṇa           | எருத்து-வவ்-விய   புலி-போன்-றன<br>nirai-ner-nēr   nirai-nēr-nirai                       |
| 10. களிறு கதவெறியாச் சிவந்துராஅய்<br>kaḷiru kataveriyāc civanturāy | களிறு   கத-வெறி-யாச்   சிவந்-துரா-அய்<br>nirai-ner-nēr   nirai-nirai-nēr                |
| 11. நுதிமழுங்கிய வெண்கோட்டான்<br>nutimaluṅkiya veṅkōṭṭān           | நுதி-மழுங்-கிய   வெண்-கோட்-டான்<br>nirai-nirai-nirai   nēr-nēr-nēr                      |
| 12. உயிருண்ணுங் கூற்றுப்போன்றன<br>uyirunṇuṅ kūṇṇupōṇṇaṇa           | உயி-ருண்-னுங்   கூற்றுப்-போன்-றன<br>nirai-ner-nēr   nērpu-nēr-nirai                     |
| 13. நீயே அலங்குளைப் பரீஇயிவுளிப்<br>nīyē alaṅkuḷaip parīiyivulip   | நீ-யே   அலங்-குளைப்   பரீஇ-யிவு-ளிப்<br>nēr-nēr   nirai-nirai   nirai-nirai-nēr         |
| 14. பொலந்தேர்மிசைப் பொலிவுதோன்றி<br>polantērmicaip polivutōṇṇi     | பொலந்-தேர்-மிசைப்   பொலிவு-தோன்-றி<br>nirai-nēr-nirai   nirai-ner-nēr                   |
| 15. மாக்கட னிவந்தெழுதரும்<br>mākkāṭa nivantelutarum                | மாக்-கட   னிவந்-தெழு-தரும்<br>nēr-nirai   nirai-nirai-nirai                             |
| 16. செஞ்ஞாயிற்றுக் கவினைமாதோ<br>ceṇṇiṅṇāyirruḷ kavinaimātō         | செஞ்-ஞா-யிற்றுக்   கவி-னைமா-தோ<br>nēr-nēr-nirai-ner-nēr   nirai-nirai-nēr               |
| 17. அனையை யாகன் மாறே<br>aṇaiyai yākaṇ māṇē                         | அனை-யை   யா-கன்   மா-றே<br>nirai-nēr   nēr-nēr   nēr-nēr                                |
| 18. தாயி றுவாக் குழவி போல<br>tāyi ruvāk kuḷavi pōla                | தா-யி   று-வாக்   குழ-வி   போ-ல<br>nēr-nēr   nēr-nēr   nirai-nēr   nēr-nēr              |
| 19. ஓவாது கூஉநின் னுடற்றியோர் நாடே<br>ōvātu kūuṇiṇ nuṭarriyōr nāṭē | ஓ-வாது   கூஉ-நின்   னுடற்-றியோர்   நா-டே<br>nēr-nērpu   nēr-nēr   nirai-nirai   nēr-nēr |

This is an excellent example of a **vañcippā** with two or three feet in its lines, and therefore is called a **mayakku aṭi vañcippā** 'vañci poem in mixed lines.' The poem has nineteen lines, employs the **vañci** meter in sixteen lines, and ends in the **ācīriyam** meter used in the last three lines. The penultimate line has four feet, while the preceding line has three. The last line has four feet.

The **acai** used here are the four basic ones: **nēr**, **nirai**, **nēru**, and **niraipu**. The types of **cīr** used are **ōr-acai-c-cīr**, **iyaṟ-cīr**, **uri-c-cīr**, **veṇ-cīr**, and **vañci uri-c-cīr**: வாள், வலந்-தர, செவ்வா-னத்து, துவைத்-தம்-பிற், and மறுப்-பட்ட-ன respectively.

The minimum number of **eḷuttu** in a foot is three (செவ்வானத்து) and the maximum is six (விலக்கம்போன்றன). The minimum number of **eḷuttu** in a line employing the **vañci** meter is eight (செவ்வானத்து வனப்புப்போன்றன) and the maximum is twelve (களிறு கதவெறியாச் சிவந்துராஅய்).

Each of the first feet in lines 1, 3, 5, and 10 is made up of a single **acai**. The first feet in lines 7 and 13 are composed of two **acai** each. In either case, the first foot in these lines (1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 13) is a refrain called **kūṇ**.

The sound (**ōcai**) achieved here is **tūṇkal**, a suspended sound confined to each **cīr**. Two possible schemes of placing the beats are suggested here. One is to have four beats per **vañci** line, and the other is to have five beats for every **vañci** line that starts with a refrain (**kūṇ**) and four beats per all the rest of the **vañci** lines. In either case, the last three lines which are in the **ācīriyam** meter would have respectively three, four, and four beats per line, the beat falling on the first part of the first **acai** in every foot. If the **vañci** lines have four beats per line, the beats would fall on the following parts: first part of the first **acai** of the refrain; second part of the first **acai** of an **īr-acai-c-cīr**; first part of the first **acai**, as well as the first part of the third **acai** if the **cīr** has three **acai** or six **eḷuttu**.



*paripāṭal 1:*

The following **paripāṭal** accommodates several kinds of lines (**aṭi**) and meters (**pā**). It has five components, namely **taravu**, **koccakam**, **arākam**, **curitakam**, and **eṇ**. The intended emotion of the poem is love expressed toward the deity Vishṇu. Here, the poem is not analyzed by the structure of its metrical feet (**cīr**), but its various components are noted.

ஆயிரம் விரித்த வணங்குடை யருத்தலை  
தீயுமிழ் திறனொடு முடிமிசை அணவர  
மாயுடை மலர்மார்பின் மையில்வால் வளைமேனிச்  
சேயுயர் பனைமிசை யெழில் வேழமேந்திய  
வாய்வாங்கும் வளைநாஞ்சி லொருகுழை யொருவனை

The above section of the poem is the **taravu** 'bringing' because it is an introduction. It introduces the deity, Tirumāl (Vishṇu), who is praised in the poem.

எரிமலர் சினைஇய கண்ணு புவை  
விரிமலர் புரையு மேனியை மேனித்  
திருனெமர்ந்த தமர்ந்த மார்பினை மார்பிற  
நெரிமணி பிறங்கும் பூணினை மால்வரை  
எரிதிரித் தன்ன பொன்புனை யடுக்கையை  
சேவலங் கொடியோய்நின் வலவயி னிறுத்து  
மேவலுட் பணிந்தமை கூறும்  
நாவ லத்தண ரருமறைப் பொருளே

This section of the poem is the **koccakam** 'pleats', which basically stands for a feature that is seen when shorter lines intercede longer lines. Here, the line marked in bold type is shorter than the others.

இணைபிரி யணிதுணி பிணிமணி யெரிபுரை விடரிடு கடர்ப்படர்  
பொலம்புனை வினைமலர் தெரிதிர டெரியுரு ளிகன்மிகு முரண்  
மிகுகட றருமணி யொடுமுத்தி யாத்தநொணி? நெறிசெறி  
வெறியுறு முறலவிற லணங்கணங்கு விரற்றணி? துணிமணி

வெயிலுற மெழில்புக ழலர்மலர் மார்பின் னெரிவயிர் நுதிநுதி  
 யெறிபடை யருத்துமலை யிவர்நவை யினிறல் துணிபட லினமணி  
**இயலெறு மெழிலி கிசையிரு ளகலமுறு கிறுபுரி யொருபுரி**  
 நாண்மலர் மலரில கினவளர் பருதியி னெளிர்மணி மார்ப ணிமண  
 மிகநா றுருவின விரைவளி மிகுகடு விசையுடு வறுதலை நிரையித  
**முணிவயி ரியமர ரைப்போ ரெழுந்துடன் நிரைத்துரைஇய**  
 தான வர்சிர முமிழ்புனல் பொழிபிழிந் துரமதிர் பதிர்பலந்தொ  
 டாவ?ஆர்வ? மாவென்ற கணை

This section is the **arākam** ‘melting, loosening, rapid movement.’ The component **arākam** is recognized when a section has a minimum of two and a maximum of six lines and all the lines are full of short letters (**kurṛeluttu**). Here, the section has four **arākam**, each containing three lines. The first line of each **arākam** is given in bold type.

பொருவே மென்றவர் மதந்தபக் கடந்து  
 செருமேம் பட்ட செயிர்தீ ரண்ணல்  
 இருவர் தாதை யிலங்குபூண் மாஅல்  
 தெருள நின்வர வறிதல்  
 மருளறு தேர்ச்சி முனைவர்க்கு மரிதே

This section is a **curitakam** ‘wrapping up, folding’ in the **āciriyam** meter. It wraps up the subject matter (**poruḷ**) in which the poem has been engaged so far.

அன்ன மரபி னனையோய் நின்னை  
 இன்னென் றுரைத்த லெமக்கெவ னெளிது

This is a couplet which receives the name **pēren** ‘large count.’

அருமைநற் கறியினு மார்வ நின்வயின்  
 பெருமையின் வல்லா யாமிவண் மொழிபவை  
 மெல்லிய வெனாஅ வெறாஅ தல்லியந்  
 திருமறு மார்பநீ யருளல் வேண்டும்

This section also is a **curitakam** and is in the **ācīriyam** meter. It wraps up the subject matter (**poruḷ**) in which the poem has been engaged so far.

**விறன்மிரு விழுச்சீ ரத்தணர் காக்கும்**  
**அறனு மார்வலர்க் களியு நீ**  
**திறனிலோர்த் திருத்திய தீதுதீர் சிறப்பின்**  
**மறனு மாற்றலர்க் கணங்கு நீ**  
**அங்கணைர் வானத் தணிநிலாத் திகழ்தரும்**  
**திங்களுந் தெறுகதிர்க் கனலியு நீ**  
**ஐத்தலை யுயரிய வணங்குடை யருத்திறல்**  
**மைந்துடை யொருவனு மடங்கலு நீ**  
**நலமுழு தனையு புகரறு காட்சிப்**  
**புலமும் புவனு நாற்றமு நீ**  
**வலனுய ரெழிலியு மாக விசும்பும்**  
**நிலனு நீடிய விமயமு நீ**  
 These are six couplets and called **pēreṇ** 'large count.' The beginning of each couplet is marked in bold type.

அதனால்

This is a refrain called **tanī-c-col** 'lone word.'

இன்னோ ரனையை யினையை யாலென  
 அன்னோர் யாமிவட் காணு மையிற்  
 பொன்னணி நேமி வலங்கொண் டேந்திய  
 மன்னுயிர் முதல்வனை யாதலின்  
 நின்னோ ரனையைநின் புகழொடும் பொலிந்தே

This is a **curitakam** which wraps up the subject matter provided so far and is in the **ācīriyam** meter.

நின்னொக்கும் புகழ்நிலுவை  
 பொன்னொக்கு முடையவை  
 புள்ளின் கொடியவை புரிவன யினவை

எள்ளுநர்க் கடந்தட்ட விகனே மியவை

மண்ணுறு மணிபா யுருவினவை

எண்ணிறந்த புகழவை யெழின்மார்பினவை

These are the components *iṭai eṇ* 'intermediary count', *cirreṇ* 'small count', and *pēreṇ* 'big count.' Lines with two metrical feet constitute the *iṭai eṇ*. The lines with four metrical feet get the name *cirreṇ*. The couplet which occurs in the last part is the *pēreṇ*.

ஆங்கு

This is a refrain (*ṭaṇi-c-col* 'lone word').

காமரு சுற்றமோ டொருங்குநின் னடியுறை

யாமியைந் தொன்றுபு வைகலும் பொலிகென

ஏழு நெஞ்சத்தேம் பரவுதும்

வாய்மொழிப் புலவநின் குணிழ் குறுமுதே

This is the final wrapping, a *curitakam* which ends the poem in the *ācīriyam* meter.

*kalittokai* 53:

This is an *ottālicaikkali*. Here, the poem is not analyzed by the structure of its metrical feet (*cīr*), but its various components are noted.

வறனுறல் அறியாத வழையமை நறுஞ்சாரல்

விறன்மலை வியலறை வீழ்பிடி உழையதா

மறமிகு வேழந்தன் மாறுகொள் மைந்தினுல்

புகர்நுதல் புண்செய்த புய்கோடு போல

உயர்முகை நறுங்காந்தள் நாடோறும் புதிதீன

அயல்நந்தி அணிபெற அருவியார்த் திழிதரும்

பயமழை தலைஇய பாடுசால் விறல்வெற்ப

This is *taravu*, which is an introduction with seven lines.

மறையினின் மணந்தாங்கே மருவறத் துறந்தபின்  
 இறைவனே நெகிழ்போட ஏற்பவும் ஒல்லுமன்  
 அயலலர் தூற்றலின் ஆய்நலன் இழந்தகண்  
 கயலுமிழ் நீர்போலக் கண்பனி கலுழாக்கால்

இனியசெய் தகன்றுநீ இன்னுதாத் துறத்தலின்  
 பனியிவள் படரெனப் பரவாமை ஒல்லுமன்  
 ஊரலர் தூற்றலின் ஒளியோடி நறுநுதல்  
 பீரல ரணிகொண்டு பிறைவனப் பிழவாக்கால்

அஞ்சலென் றகன்றுநீ அருளாது துறத்தலின்  
 நெஞ்சழி துயரட நிறுப்பவும் இயையுமன்  
 நனவினால் நலம்வாட நலிதந்த நடுங்கலூர்  
 களவினால் அழிவுற்றுக் கங்குலும் ஆற்றுக்கால்

The above three verses are *tāḷicai*. They focus on one theme.

எனவாங்கு

This is a refrain, called the *aṭai-nilai-k-kiḷavi* ‘word which stands enclosed.’

விளியானோ யுழந்தானு என்றேழி நின்மலை  
 முளிவுற வருந்திய முளமுதிர் சிறுதினை  
 தளிபெறத் தகைபெற் ருங்குநின்  
 அளிபெற நந்துமிவ ளாய்நுதற் கவினே

This is the *curitakam* with four lines, which ends the poem in the *āciriyam* meter. It is also known as the *pōkku* because it states the intent and makes the poem reach an end without saying anything more. It also collects and contains the matters stated in the *taravu* and *tāḷicai*.

*kalittokai* 51; a *kalivenṇā*:

This poem exceeds the normal twelve lines. Also it conveys the subject matter (*poruḷ*) directly, not obliquely. The lines are composed of *iyarcīr* and *veṇṇīr*. The lines are *aḷavaṭi* and the letters they contain

range from ten to thirteen per line. The last line has three metrical feet like a *venṇā* line and ends with a *nirai acai* making up its last foot.

கடர்த்தொடஇ கேளாய் தெருவில்நாம் ஆடும்  
மணர்சிறறில் காலின் சிதையா அடைச்சிய  
கோதை பரிந்து வரிப்பந்து கொண்டோடி  
நோதக்க செய்யுள் சிறுபட்டி மேலோர்நாள்  
அன்னையும் யானும் இருந்தேமா இல்லிரே  
உண்ணுநீர் வேட்டேன் எனவந்தாற் கன்னை  
அடர்பொற் சிரகத்தால் வாக்கிச் சுடரிழாய்  
உண்ணுநீ ருட்டிவா என்ற ளெனயானுந்  
தன்னை யறியாது சென்றேன்மற் றென்னை  
வளைமுன்கை பற்றி நலியத் தெருமந்திட்  
அன்னு யிவனொருவன் செய்ததுகா ணென்றேனா  
அன்னை யலறிப் படர்தரத் தன்னையான்  
உண்ணுநீர் விக்கினா ணென்றேனா அன்னையும்  
தன்னைப் புறம்பழித்து நீவமற் றென்னைக்  
கடைக்கணுற் கொல்வான்போல் நோக்கி நகைக்கூட்டல்  
செய்தானக் கள்வன் மகன்

*kalittokai 115; a kalivenṇā:*

This poem is a *kalivenṇā* of a different type. There is a *taravu*, *iṭai-nilai-p-pāṭṭu*, a line with five metrical feet (*aiñcīr aṭi*), and refrain.

தோழிநாங் காணுமை யுண்ட கடுங்கள்ளை மெய்கூர (five feet)  
நாணுது சென்று நடுங்க வுரைத்தாங்குக்  
கரந்ததூஉம் கையொடு கோட்பட்டாங் கண்டாய்நம்  
புல்லினத் தாய மகன்குடி வந்ததோர்  
முல்லையொரு காழுங் கண்ணியும் மெல்லியால்  
கூந்தலுட் பெய்து முடித்தேன்மன் தோழியாய்  
வெண்ணெய் உரைஇ விரித்த கதுப்போடே

அன்னையும் அத்தனும் இல்லரா யாய்நாண  
அன்னமுன் வீழ்ந்தன்றப் பு  
This is the **taravu**, an introduction.

அதனை வினவலுஞ் செய்யாள் சினவலுஞ் செய்யாள்  
நெருப்புக்கை தொட்டவர் போல விதித்திட்டு  
நீங்கிப் புறங்கடைப் போயினாள் யானுமென்  
சாந்துளர் கூழை முடியா நிலந்தாழ்ந்த  
பூங்கரை நீலந் தழீஇத் தளர்பொல்கிப்  
பாங்கருங் கானத் தொளித்தேன் அதற்கெல்லா  
ஈங்கெவன் அஞ்ச வது

This is **iṭai-nilai-p-pāṭṭu**, which is like a **tālicaī**, but does not have a subdued tone, and neither does it repeat its focus on one theme. Note that there is a refrain (அதனை) in the beginning.

அஞ்சல் அவன்கண்ணி நீபுனைந்தா யாயின் நமரும்  
அவன்கண் அடைகுழந்தார் நின்னை அகன்கண்  
வரைப்பின் மணல்தாழப் பெய்து திரைப்பில்  
வதுவையும் ஈங்கே அயர்ப் அதுவேயாம்  
அல்கலுஞ் சூழ்ந்த வினை

This is **curitakam** ending the poem in the **veṇṇā** meter. Note that there is a refrain (அஞ்சல்) in the beginning.

*kalittokai* 62; a **koccakakkali**:

This **koccaka-k-kali** has **neṭu veṇ pāṭṭu**, **kuṟu veṇ pāṭṭu**, **koccakam**, and **curitakam** as its components.

ஏன இஃதொத்தன் நாணிலன் தன்னொடு  
மேவேமென் பாரையும் மேவினன் கைப்பற்றும்  
மேவினும் மேவாக் கடையும் அஃதெல்லாம்  
நீயறிதி யானஃ தறிகல்லேன் புவமன்ற

மெல்லிணர் செல்லாக் கொடியன்னாய் நின்னையான்  
 புல்லினி தாகலிற் புல்லினென் எல்லா  
 தமக்கினி தென்று வலிதிற் பிறர்க்கின்து  
 செய்வது நன்றமோ மற்று

This is a **neṭu veṇ pāṭṭu**, long song in less than twelve lines employing the **veṇpā** meter.

சுடர்த்தொட போற்றாய் களைநின் முதுக்குறைமை போற்றிக்கேள்  
 வேட்டார்க் கினிதாயி னல்லது நீர்க்கினிதென்  
 றுண்பவோ நீருண் பவர்

This is a **kuru veṇ pāṭṭu**, short song employing the **veṇpā** meter. Note that the first line of this **kuru veṇ pāṭṭu** has five metrical feet (**aiñcīraṭi**).

செய்வ தறிகல்லேன் யாதுசெய் வேன்கொலோ  
 ஐவா யரவி னிடைப்பட்டு தைவாரா  
 மையின் மதியின் விளங்கு முகத்தாரை  
 வெளவிக் கொளலும் அறனெனக் கண்டன்று

This is **koccakam**.

அறனு மதுகண்டற் ருயின் திறனின்றிக்  
 கூறுஞ்சொற் கேளான் நலிதரும் பண்டுநாம்  
 வேறல்ல மென்பதொன் றுண்டால் அவனொடு  
 மாறுண்டோ நெஞ்சே நமக்கு

This is **curitakam** ending the poem in the **veṇpā** meter.

*kalittokai* 60; a **uṛalkali** (dialogue):

கணங்கணி வனமுலைச் சுடர்கொண்ட நறுநுதல்  
 மணங்கமழ் நறுங்கோதை மாரிவீ ழிருங்கூந்தல்  
 நுணங்கெழில் ஒண்துத்தி நுழைநொசி மடமருங்குல்  
 வணங்கிறை வரிமுன்கை வரியார்ந்த அல்குலாய்

This is **taravu**.



கண்ணூர்ந்த நலத்தாரைக் கதுமெனக் கண்டவர்க்  
 குண்ணின்ற நோய்மிக உயிரெஞ்சு துயர்செய்தல்  
 பெண்ணன்று புனையிழாய் எனக்கூறித் தொழுஉந் தொழுதே  
 கண்ணுநீ ராக நடுங்கினன் இந்நகாய்  
 என்செய்தான் கொல்லோ இஃதொத்தன் தன்கண்  
 பொருகளி றன்ன தகைசாம்பி யுள்ளுள்  
 உருகுவான் போலும் உடைந்து

This is a *neṭu veṇ pāṭṭu*.

தெருவின்கண் காரண மின்றிக் கலங்குவார்க் கண்டுநீ  
 வாரண வாசிப் பதம்பெயர்த்தல் ஏதில  
 நீதின்மேற் கொள்வ தெவன்

This is a *kuru veṇ pāṭṭu*.

அலர்முலை யாயிழை நல்லாய் கதுமெனப்  
 பேரம ருண்கணின் தோழி உறீஇய  
 ஆரூ ரெவ்வம் உயிர்வாங்கும்  
 மற்றிந்நோய் தீரும் மருந்தருளாய் ஒண்டொட

This is *koccakam*.

நின்றுகங் காணும் மருந்தினேன் என்னுமால்  
 நின்றுகந் தான்பெறி னல்லது கொன்னே  
 மருந்து பிறிதியாதும் இல்வேன் திருந்திழாய்  
 என்செய்வாங் கொல்இனி நாம்

This is a *veṇpā*.

பொன்செய்வாம்

This is a *tani-c-col*.

ஆறு விலங்கித் தெருவின்கண் நின்றெருவன்  
 கூறுஞ்சொல் வாயெனக் கொண்டதன் பண்புணராந்

தேறல் எளினென்பாம் நாம்

This is a **kuṟu veṇ pāṭṭu**.

ஒருவன் சாமா றெளிதென்பாம் மற்று

This is a line with five metrical feet. It does not have the nature of a **pōkku**, which would have stated the intent and made the poem reach an end without saying anything more.

சிறிதாங்கே மாணவு ரம்பல் அலரின் அலர்கென

நானும் நிறையும் நயப்பில் பிறப்பிலி

பூணகம் நோக்கி இமையான் நயந்துநங்

கேண்மை விருப்புற் றவனை யெதிர்நின்று

நாண்டப் பெயர்த்த நயவர வின்றே

This is **curitakam** ending the poem in the **ācīriyam** meter. Note that the penultimate line has four feet, so the **ācīriyam** meter of this **curitakam** is called **nilai maṇṭila ācīriyam**.

## LENGTHENING OF SOUNDS (aḷapeṭai) AND VOWEL CLUSTERS<sup>1</sup>

GENERAL: There is a twofold approach to the understanding of what has so far been referred to as “aḷapeṭai” in the literature — one laid out by the authors of Tamil grammatical texts and the other followed by the commentators.<sup>2</sup> What authors of grammatical texts refer to as an

---

<sup>1</sup> This chapter presupposes an understanding of the basic metrical unit **acai**, metrical feet **cīr**, and metrical binding **taḷai**. See “Theory of Classical Tamil Poetry” where these items are discussed.

<sup>2</sup> For a different discussion on **aḷapeṭai** in traditional Tamil grammars and related works, see Sp. Thinnappan (1976:539-560). In this informative article, the author concludes that “**aḷapeṭai** according to the meaning of the term itself is a prosodical feature; it functions as a free variant with a long vowel form. It occurs only for the purpose of filling metrical exigency. Historically, the view of taking **aḷapeṭai** as a disyllabic one is earlier than the view of taking it as a monosyllabic one. The later view is introduced because of the influence of Sanskrit **pluta** and of the loss of vowel cluster in the language” (Sp. Thinnappan, 1976:557).

**aḷapeṭai** ‘elongation’ process has been categorized as **iyarkai aḷapeṭai** and **ceyyuḷ-icai-nirai-aḷapeṭai** by some commentators.<sup>3</sup> Two other types, namely **in-icai-aḷapeṭai** and **col-icai-aḷapeṭai**, discussed by other commentators, are construed as mere vowel clusters by the authors of grammatical texts.<sup>4</sup> These various items are discussed below.

In Tamil grammatical tradition, vowels and consonants are considered to have intrinsic length. One unit measure of length (**māttirai**) is equal to a snap of the fingers or a wink of the eyes.<sup>5</sup> Consonants measure one-half unit in length, while short and long vowels measure one and two units respectively. According to traditional Tamil grammars, when a long vowel or a consonant is elongated beyond its intrinsic length for the sake of fulfilling some metrical requirement in poetry or to derive an onomatopoeic expression or a vocative form, the process is called **aḷapeṭai** “increase in the unit measure” or ‘raising the quantity/duration.’<sup>6</sup> The elongation is beyond two unit measures of length for a vowel, and to any level of elongation beyond its intrinsic length for a consonant. It enables one to understand the differences among various meters.<sup>7</sup> The elongated item functions as a variant of a long vowel or a consonant. Thus, **aḷapeṭai** as construed by the authors of Tamil grammars is basically a phenomenon of elongation of a single long vowel or a consonant. Any of the seven long

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, Nacciṇārkkīṇiyam, commentary on Rule 6.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, Nacciṇārkkīṇiyam, Rues 226, 258, 261, 267, 277, and 292. The Extensive Commentary (“virutti urai”) on Naṇṇūl, Rule 91.

<sup>5</sup> Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, Nacciṇārkkīṇiyam, Rule 7.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, Nacciṇārkkīṇiyam, Rules 6, 33, and 40; Tolkāppiyam, collatikāram, Cēṇāvaraiyam, 125. Metrical requirement is explained below. See “Elongation for the Sake of Metrical Requirement.”

<sup>7</sup> Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, ceyyuḷiyal, Nacciṇārkkīṇiyam, Rule 2. See note 22 below.

vowels (**ā**, **ī**, **ū**, **ē**, **ai**, **ō**, and **au**) can participate in the elongation process, whereas only certain consonants (**ṇ**, **ñ**, **ṇ**, **n**, **m**, **ṇ**, **y**, **v**, **l**, and **ḷ**) and the **āytam** (**ḥ**) can be elongated.<sup>8</sup>

Normally, the lengthening of vowels and consonants also occurs for grammatical purposes, but the lengthening in those cases is not construed in grammatical texts as an elongation (**aḷapeṭai**) process per se. For example, the lengthening of a short vowel into a long vowel in instances like that of deriving a verbal noun from a verb stem is never construed as an **aḷapeṭai**: e.g., **pāṭu** ‘suffering’ (verbal noun) from **paṭu** ‘to suffer’ (verb stem). Similarly, the long **ī** in the word **ottī** ‘you resemble ... ; you are like ...’ (*puṛa.56:11, 12, 13, 14*), which is a variant of short **i** (cf. *otti pari.19:99, 100*), is not considered as an **aḷapeṭai**. And the doubling of the stem-final consonants in forms like **īṭallē** < **īṭal** ‘giving’ + **ē** particle (*puṛa.123:2*) and **ōmpallē** < **ōmpal** ‘warding off’ + **ē** particle (*kuṛu.294:8*) is not acknowledged as an **aḷapeṭai** process. In such instances where the stem has a long vowel (**ī** in **īṭal** and **ō** in **ōmpal**) and therefore does not morphophonemically trigger the doubling of the stem-final, the doubling of the stem-final is, in fact, due to metrical exigency but not called an **aḷapeṭai** process. Thus, it is confirmed that a true **aḷapeṭai** is the elongation of a long vowel (**neṭil**) or the elongation of a vowelless consonant (**orru**).

When orthographically representing the elongation process, the elongated vowel is followed by its shorter counterpart once or twice. The long vowel **ā** has **a** as its shorter counterpart, similarly, **ī** has **i**, **ū** has **u**, **ē** has **e**, **ai** has **i**, **ō** has **o**, and **au** has **u** as respective shorter counterparts. No glide is inserted between the two juxtaposed vowels formed in this manner: **āa**, **īi**, **ūu**, **ēe**, **aii**, **ōo**, and **auu**. In the case of an elongated consonant/**āytam**, the consonant/**āytam** is repeated once to indicate the elongation: **ṇṇ**, **ññ**, **ṇṇ**, **nn**, **mm**, **ṇṇ**, **yy**, **ll**, **vv**, **ḷḷ**, and **ḥḥ**.

<sup>8</sup> Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, Nacciṇārkkīṇiyam, Rules 41 and 42. Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, ceyyuliyal, Nacciṇārkkīṇiyam, Rule 18.

When commentators on Tamil grammars discuss “**aḷapeṭai**,” they invariably refer to the juxtaposed vowels or juxtaposed like-consonants within a word. Alternatively stated, the juxtaposition of a long vowel next to its corresponding short vowel and the repetition of the same consonant within a word have been treated as “**aḷapeṭai**” in the Tamil commentatorial tradition: **āa**, **īi**, **ūu**, **ēe**, **aii**, **ōo**, **auu**, **ṇṇ**, **ṇṇ**, **ṇṇ**, **nn**, **mm**, **nn**, **yy**, **ll**, **vv**, **ll**, and **ḥḥ**. Unlike the authors of grammatical texts, some commentators give different names to what they see as different types of the **aḷapeṭai** process concerning the vowels. In their commentaries, the vocalic **aḷapeṭai** is called the **uyir-aḷapeṭai** and the consonantal **aḷapeṭai** gets the name **orru-aḷapeṭai**. Then, four types of vocalic **aḷapeṭai** and one type of consonantal **aḷapeṭai** are discussed. The four types of vocalic **aḷapeṭai** are **iyarkai aḷapeṭai**, **ceyyuḷ-icai-nirai-aḷapeṭai**, **in-icai-aḷapeṭai**, and **col-icai-aḷapeṭai**.<sup>9</sup> The **iyarkai aḷapeṭai** refers to words which contain vowel clusters and do not have alternates without the cluster: e.g., **makaṭūu** ‘woman’ (*ciru*:192). The second type, **ceyyuḷ-icai-nirai-aḷapeṭai** or just **icai-nirai-aḷapeṭai**, refers to words in which a long vowel is elongated further for metrical fulfillment, and these words do have alternates without the elongated vowel: e.g., **kaṭāam** ‘rut of an elephant’ (*narr*.18:8) **vs.** **kaṭām** (*kali*.48:5); **elāam** ‘all’ (*kali*.65:26) **vs.** **elām** (*kali*.83:22); **tāalnta** ‘low’ (*kali*.114:1) **vs.** **tālnta** (*kali*.96:3). The third type, **in-icai-aḷapeṭai**, refers to words in which a short vowel is lengthened first to its corresponding long vowel and the resulting long vowel is elongated further without any metrical exigency. This supposedly happens to create a melodic sound and therefore is called **in-icai-aḷapeṭai** ‘**aḷapeṭai** of sweet/pleasant melody’: e.g., **eṭuppatūum** (< **eṭuppatu** ‘that which raises/nurtures’ + **um** ‘and’). According to the commentators, here the last vowel **u** in **eṭuppatu** is first lengthened to **ū** and elongated further triggering the vowel cluster **ūu**. The last type, **col-icai-aḷapeṭai**, refers to words which change their fundamental

<sup>9</sup> Cf. The Extensive Commentary (“*virutti urai*”) on *Naṇṇūl*, Rule 91, pp.56-57.

shape and in some cases have grammatical significance: e.g., **kurii** ‘sparrow’ (*kurū.46:2*) vs. **kuruvi** (*pari.18:47*); **marii** ‘to get accustomed to’ (*peru:383*) vs. **maruvi** (*matu:541*); **nacaii** ‘desiring, having desired’ (*ciru:38*) vs. **nacai** ‘desire’ (*poru:2*). The last example is supposed to illustrate the grammatical significance of the elongation. According to the commentators, the verb form **nacaii** ‘desiring, having desired’ is derived from the noun **nacai** ‘desire’, so they claim that by the elongation from **ai** to **aii**, the noun is changed into a verb.<sup>10</sup>

With this background information, we can proceed to see how the so-called “**aḷapeṭai**” is actually employed in classical Tamil poetry.

### Elongation for the Sake of Metrical Requirement

Vowels and consonants in classical Tamil are elongated mostly for the sake of meter, a phenomenon referred to as “metrical requirement” in this study. Each line (**aṭi**) in a classical Tamil poem is supposed to contain particular patterns of **acai** and metrical feet (**cīr**) so as to bring certain metrical structure to the line. But, when words fall short of particular patterns of **acai** that are needed for the required patterns of feet, a vowel or a consonant in those words is elongated beyond its intrinsic length; the additional length is represented orthographically by a vowel or a consonant, depending upon which one is elongated. The vowel or consonant representing the additional length thereby participates in the formation of a new **acai** pattern and qualifies the word to meet the particular pattern of **cīr** required in the line.

For example, the word **ñaman** ‘pointer of a scale’, has the pattern of a **nirai acai**. It cannot by itself make up a metrical foot in certain contexts: e.g., *terikōl ñaman pōla* ‘like the pointer of a judging-scale.’

---

<sup>10</sup> This study considers the form **nacaii** as derived from the verb stem **nacai**. See “Vowel Clusters in Classical Tamil” in this chapter for a similar example.

Therefore, the word-final consonant **n** is elongated to be used in a poem: *terikōl n̄amann pōla* (*pura.6:9*). The second consonant **n** in the elongated version **n̄amann** is separated from the first **n** for metrical analysis and achieves the status of a **nēr acai**. Thus, the new form **n̄amann** is scanned as **nirai-nēr** (**n̄aman-n**) and qualifies as a proper foot (**cīr**) in the line under question. It fulfills the metrical requirement and the elongation here is a true **aḷapeṭai**. More examples which include the elongation of vowels are treated below.<sup>11</sup>

### Elongation Provides Different Metrical and Grammatical Possibilities

Consider the following forms meaning ‘children’: **cīrār** (சிறர்), **cīrāar** (சிறாஅர்), and **cīruvar** (சிறுவர்). All of them are derived from **cīru** ‘young, small’ + **ar** PNG. The first form **cīrār** does demonstrate a lengthening from **a** to **ā** when **cīru** and **ar** are combined, but this lengthening is not an **aḷapeṭai per se**. On the other hand, the second form, **cīrāar**, illustrates the elongation of **ā** to **āa**, which is a true **aḷapeṭai**. The third one, **cīrāaar** illustrates a further elongation from **āa** to **āaa**, which is also a true **aḷapeṭai**. The last, **cīruvar**, illustrates no lengthening or elongation, but the insertion of a glide (**v**) between the stem **cīru** and the suffix **ar**.

Each of these forms has a specific metrical pattern and therefore a different metrical possibility: **cīrār** is a single **nirai acai**, but the final consonant (**r**) can be joined with another item to become a part of another **acai**; **cīrāar** can function as a single **nirai acai** or as a foot made up of two **acai**, **nirai-nēr** (**cīrā-ar**); **cīrāaar** is **nirai-nirai** (**cīrā-aar**) or could function as **nirai-nēr** (**cīrāa-ar**); **cīruvar** is **nirai-nēr** (**cīru-var**). The

---

<sup>11</sup> See “Theory of Classical Tamil Poetry” for a discussion of the metrical significance of letters (**eḷuttu**) and specifically for an explanation of how elongated vowels and consonants are scanned.



way they are scanned depends on the line in which they occur. In classical Tamil, they occur in the following contexts:

titiyīṇ **cīṛārum** vitiyīṇ makkaḷum (*pari.3:6*)  
 karuṅkai viṇaiṇar kātalaṇ **cīṛāar** (*peru.223*)  
**cīṛāaar** tuṭiyar pātuval makāaar (*pura.291:1*)  
 paintoṭi makaliroṭu **cīruvarp** payantu (*narr.330:9*)

In the first instance, the final consonant in **cīṛār** is followed by **um** and therefore **cīṛārum** ‘and the children’ becomes a metrical foot (**cīṛ**) of the pattern *nirai-nēr* (**cīṛā-rum**). In the second instance, **cīṛāar** ‘children’ qualifies as a foot by itself and is of the pattern *nirai-nēr* (**cīṛā-ar**). The third form, **cīṛāaar** ‘O children!’ is of the pattern *nirai-nirai* (**cīṛā-aar**). Note that here the elongation for the second time (**āa** to **āaa**) turns the noun **cīṛāar** into the vocative **cīṛāaar**. Without the second elongation, the word could be construed as a plain noun, not necessarily a vocative. Consequently, the whole line **cīṛāar tuṭiyar pātuval makāaar** could be misunderstood as a list of nouns (‘children, drummers, and skillful young singers’), rather than a series of address forms (‘Children! Drummers! Skillful Young Singers!’) — hence, the elongation: **cīṛāaar tuṭiyar pātuval makāaar** (*pura.291:1*).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Another pair of forms, as an example of different metrical patterns: **celliya** (*aiṅk.378:1*) and **celīiya** (*narr.19:7*), which mean the same, ‘to leave’, are derived from **cel** ‘go’ + **iya** infinitive suffix. Note that **celliya** is *nēr-nirai* (**cel-liya**) whereas **celīiya** could function as *nirai-nirai* (**celī-iya**) or *nirai-nēr* (**celīi-ya**) depending on what follows in a poem.

Examples of forms in which the elongation has grammatical significance: **akap-paṭēen** ‘I will not cause ... to be caught’ < **akappaṭu** + **ēn** PNG (*pura.72:9*); **uṭṭi** ‘making ... wear’ < **uṭu** ‘to wear’ + **i** past/completive marker (*peru.470*).

## Vowel Clusters in Classical Tamil

Consider the form **vaḷaii** ‘having bent; bending ...’ (*cīru:30*) which is derived from **vaḷai** ‘to bend’ + **i** past/completive marker. The cluster **aii** here does not reflect the elongation of **ai** to **aii**. Similarly, **iraiiya** ‘to beg’ (*pati.52:11*), derived from **ira** ‘beg’ + **iya** (infinitive suffix) does not reflect the elongation of a long vowel. In this case, the stem-final short vowel **a** changes to **ai** (or “lengthened” to become **ai**) and the suffix **iya** is simply added to it. The long vowel **ai** in **iraiiya** cannot be considered as a variant of short **a**, nor can the short **i** in the suffix **iya** be considered as symbolizing the elongation of **ai**. Therefore, the process here is not a true elongation. These are examples of mere vowel clusters.<sup>13</sup>

## Elongation vs. Clusters

As has been demonstrated above, both true elongation of long vowels (= **uyir aḷapeṭai**) and vowel clusters are represented in orthography as “juxtaposed” vowels in classical Tamil. There is no such confusion between elongated consonants (= **orru aḷapeṭai**) and clusters of like consonants, because elongated consonants (e.g., **ṇṇ**) and like-consonant clusters (e.g., **ṇṇ**) are the same. They both indicate a true **aḷapeṭai** process. Unlike-consonant clusters (e.g., **ym**) occur as a result of joining stems and affixes. This kind of consonant cluster (**ym**) is never mistaken for an elongated consonant or consonantal **aḷapeṭai**. Therefore, for the practical purposes of this study, it would be most fruitful to orient discussion from the perspective of juxtaposed vowels and juxtaposed consonants in a word, bearing in mind that certain juxtaposed vowels do not always

---

<sup>13</sup> However, some commentators on Tamil grammars would call forms like **vaḷaii** a **col-icai-aḷapeṭai**.

stand for the elongation of a single long vowel.<sup>14</sup> It is also worth noting that the second letter in the juxtaposed items (e.g., **a** and **ṇ** in **āa** and **ṇṇ**) is not always separated from the preceding letter during metrical analysis.<sup>15</sup>

### Occurrence of Juxtaposed Items

Juxtaposed vowels are found anywhere within a word: in the initial, medial, or final position. The clustering is used to fulfill some metrical requirement or occurs as a morphophonemic or grammatical phenomenon. The former was discussed above. As a morphophonemic or grammatical phenomenon, the cluster arises from processes like suffixation or derivation of vocatives and other nominal forms. When the stem-final vowel and the initial vowel or consonant of the following item are harmonized, a vowel cluster emerges (e.g., **āa**, **aii**) between the stem and the following item and what appears as a long vowel on the surface level may, in fact, have resulted from a different vowel in the underlying level.<sup>16</sup> Fulfilling the

<sup>14</sup> Specifically, vowel clusters (**īi** and **aii**) arising from adding the past marker **i** to certain stems do not represent the true elongation of **ī** or **ai**. Examples are given below.

<sup>15</sup> See note 11. Commentators note that when the juxtaposed items, which they call “**aḷapeṭai**,” arise as a result of conjoining (**puṇarcci**) or for implying some special meaning (**poruḷ pulappāṭṭirku**), the second item in the cluster is not separated from its preceding letter during metrical analysis: cf. Tolkāppiyam, *poruḷatikāram*, *Pērācīriyam*, commentary on *ceyyuḷiyal*, Rule 328; Tolkāppiyam, *poruḷatikāram*, Nacc:21, cey.17.

Unfortunately, the examples provided by the commentators are not from classical Tamil poetry, except in one instance (*malai:352*) which is discussed in this chapter as well as in “Theory of Classical Tamil Poetry.” What actually seems to be happening in classical Tamil is that only rarely the second letter (**eḷuttu**) in juxtaposed items has to be discounted during metrical analysis. The examples given below include such instances (e.g., **taḷiūu**, **ēey**). One must also remember that such a phenomenon, where the second item is discounted, is contextual.

<sup>16</sup> An example, *ira* ‘beg’ + *iya* (infinitive suffix) > *iraiiya* ‘to beg’ (*pati.52:11*), was discussed above in “Vowel Clusters in Classical Tamil.”

metrical requirement is concomitant of such clustering and the second vowel in the cluster is not metrically significant in some instances.<sup>17</sup> Examples are given below.

Juxtaposition of like consonants (e.g., **ññ**, **ṇṇ**), which in fact indicates a true elongation, occurs only in word-medial or word-final position to fulfill some metrical requirement or produce onomatopoeic words. The second item in the cluster does not always have metrical significance. Examples are given below.

From another perspective, it can be said that juxtaposed vowels which appear in the first syllable of a stem do so purely for the sake of meter, whereas juxtaposed consonants which appear in the first syllable of a stem may or may not do so for the sake of meter. In other syllables, the juxtaposed items might reflect either the true elongation of a single item or a result of joining two items (e.g., **iraiiya**).

## EXAMPLES

<i>Juxtaposed Items</i>	<i>Structure and Example</i>
-------------------------	------------------------------

**āa:**

This juxtaposition occurs in three circumstances: (i) when the long vowel **ā** is elongated in a monosyllabic stem or in the second syllable of a disyllabic stem with open syllables; (ii) when the suffix **um** or a suffix beginning with **a**, **ā**, or **y** is added to a monosyllabic stem or to a disyllabic stem with open syllables; (iii) when a word is added to a monosyllabic stem or to a disyllabic stem with open syllables to result in a doublet or a noun-noun type of compound.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> See note 15.

<sup>18</sup> See "Notes on Miscellaneous Items" for a discussion of doublets.

(pronoun; metrical requirement)

cērvā rātaḷiṇ yāa mirappavai (pari.5:78)

‘... what we beg for’

[yāam < yām ‘we.’ Here the long vowel ā in the stem is elongated. It is a true aḷapeṭai. Without the elongation of ā to āa, the word would be yām, a nēr acai which cannot by itself make up a metrical foot (cīr) in this context. The elongation of ā makes yā-a to be construed as a foot of the pattern nēr-nēr, which produces the metrical binding called iyaṛcīr veṇ taḷai when combined with the following foot.]

(vocative; metrical requirement)

varuvarkol vayan̄kilāy valippalyāṇ kēḷiṇi (kali.11:5)

‘Now listen, lady wearing bright ornaments,

I assure you. He will arrive.’

[vayan̄kilāy ‘O lady wearing bright ornaments’

< vayan̄kilāy < vayan̄ku ‘to be bright’ + iḷai ‘ornaments’

First, the ai in iḷai is changed to āy resulting in the vocative form vayan̄kilāy. Then the ā is elongated for the sake of meter. It is a true aḷapeṭai. Without the elongation, vayan̄kilāy would be nira-nirai (vayan̄-kilāy). With the elongation, vayan̄kilāy is nira-nirai-nēr (vayan̄-kilā-ay) and nicely produces the metrical binding called kalittaḷai with the following foot.]

(adjectival participle; suffixation; metrical requirement)

īṅkai ... tiraḷvī ... aṛaimicait tām ... (narr.79:1, 3)

‘where the shapely īṅkai flowers spread on the rocks’

[tām < tā ‘to spread, scatter’ + um adjectival participle suffix. The stem-final vowel is elongated after deleting the u in the suffix. It is a true aḷapeṭai. Without the elongation, tām would not qualify as a

foot. **tā-am** is **nēr-nēr** and produces **iyarcīr veṇ taḷai** with the preceding foot.]

(adverbial participle; suffixation; metrical requirement)

meṇcāyalōr ... veriyāṭu makaḷiroṭu ceriyat **tāayk** (*paṭṭ:150, 155*)  
‘gentle lovely women, **spreading around** in order

to join closely with the women dancing in frenzy’

[**tāay** < **tā** ‘to spread’ + **y** adverbial participle suffix. See the explanation given above for **yāam**. Here the long vowel **ā** in the stem **tā** is elongated. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. **tā-ay** is **ner-nēr**. It produces **nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai** with the preceding foot.]

(verbal noun; suffixation; metrical requirement)

kaḷirukaṇ ṭaḷūum **aḷāal** maṇanta ... ciṇāar (*pura.46:5*)  
‘children who forgot their weeping **cry**

when they looked at the elephant’

[**aḷāal** < **aḷu** ‘to cry’ + **al** verbal noun suffix. Here, the short vowel **a** in the suffix is elongated. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. Without the elongation, **aḷāl** would be a single **nirai acai**. But **aḷā-al** is **nirai-nēr** and produces **iyarcīr veṇ taḷai** with the following foot.]

(negative imperative/optative; suffixation;  
metrical requirement)

**aṛāa liyarō** avaruṭaik kēṇmai (*aka.40:10*)  
‘May his friendship **not be severed**.’

[**aṛāaliyarō** ‘may it not be severed’ < **aṛu** ‘to sever, cut off’ + **al** negative marker + **iyarō** imperative/optative suffix. Note that the short vowel **a** in the suffix is elongated. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. **aṛā-a** is **nirai-nēr** and produces **iyarcīr veṇ taḷai** with the following foot.]

(negative imperative/optative; suffixation;  
metrical requirement)

muyāṅkal viṭāal ivai (aka.26:9)

‘Do not let them go without embracing (me).’

[viṭāal ‘do not let go’ < viṭu ‘to let go’ + al negative marker; imperative/optative suffix. Note that the short vowel a in the suffix is elongated. It is a true aḷapeṭai. viṭā-al is nirai-nēr and produces iyaṛcīr veṇ taḷai with the following foot.]

(negative participial noun; suffixation; metrical requirement)

uṭāa pōrā ākutaḷ aṛintum paṭāam maññaikku ṭtta em kō

(pura.141:10-11)

‘our king who gave a shawl to the peacock although he knew that it is (a bird) which would not wrap and cover itself (with the shawl).’

[uṭāa < uṭu ‘to wrap around’ + ā PNG. Here, the suffix ā is elongated. It is a true aḷapeṭai. uṭā-a is nirai-nēr and produces nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai with the following foot. Note that the long ā in the next word pōrā is not elongated, because the latter already is nēr-nēr (pō-rā) and qualifies as a foot.]

(compound derivation; metrical requirement)

miṭāac conri

(kuri:201)

‘cooked rice in the big pot’

[miṭāac conri < miṭā ‘large/big pot’ + conri ‘cooked rice.’ Here, miṭā by itself cannot qualify as a foot and so the long ā is elongated. It is a true aḷapeṭai. miṭā-a is nirai-nēr and produces nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai with the following foot.]

(doublet; metrical requirement)

cāṇṛāḷa rīṇṛa takāat takāamakāaṇ (pari.8:57)

‘Unscrupulous man, born to noble ones.’

[takāat takāa ‘unscrupulous’ < takā + takā; takāattakāa is a doublet.

takā is negative adjectival participle of taku ‘to be proper’;

Here, takā by itself cannot qualify as a foot and so the stem-final ā is elongated to āa. It is a true aḷapeṭai. takā-at is nirai-nēr and produces iyarcīr veṇ taḷai with the following foot.]

ii:

This juxtaposition occurs in two circumstances: (i) when the long vowel ī is elongated in the first syllable of the stem or elsewhere as in a vocative; (ii) when a suffix beginning with i is added to a monosyllabic stem or to a disyllabic stem with open syllables.

(nominal form; metrical requirement)

nīr inmaiṇ (pura.355:2)

[nīr ‘water’]

‘since there is no water’

(See the explanation given above for yāam. nī-ir is nēr-nēr and produces nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai with the following foot. It is a true aḷapeṭai.)

(verb form; metrical requirement)

celvar ... irappōrk kīi yāmaiṇ [celvar irappōrkku īyāmaiṇ] (pura.165:3-4)

‘since the rich people do not give to the suppliants’

[īyāmai < ī ‘to give’ + y (glide) + ā negative marker + mai verbal noun suffix. The stem ī does not qualify as a cīr, whereas ī-i is a nēr-nēr and produces nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai with the following foot. The elongation īi is a true aḷapeṭai.]



(verb form; metrical requirement)

cakaṭam ... vīn tāṅku (kuru.165:3-4)

‘like the cart fell apart’,<sup>19</sup>

[vīntāṅku < vī ‘to fall apart’ + nt completive/past marker + āṅku particle ‘thus.’ The form vīn would not qualify as a foot, whereas vī-in is nēr-nēr. It produces nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai with the following foot. The elongation īi is a true aḷapeṭai.]

(vocative form; metrical fulfillment is concomitant)

cuṭarttoṭīi kēḷāy (kali.51:15)

‘O woman wearing shining bracelets, listen.’

[cuṭarttoṭī ‘shining bracelets’ < cuṭar ‘to shine like flame’ + toṭī ‘bracelets.’ The form cuṭarttoṭī refers to a woman by metonymy. The final vowel i is elongated turning the noun into a vocative. It is a true aḷapeṭai. Here, cuṭart-toṭī-i is of the pattern nirai-nirai-nēr and produces nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai with the following foot.]

(adjectival participle; suffixation; metrical requirement)

kaṭitiṭi verīiya kamañcūl veṅkuruku (aka.141:19)

‘the pregnant white crane which was scared of the sudden thunder’

[verīiya < veru ‘to be scared of’ + i completive/past marker + y (glide) + a adjectival participle suffix. Note that īi has resulted from the past marker i. It is a true aḷapeṭai. Without the elongation, veri-ya would be nirai-nēr and produce a veṅ taḷai with the following foot. With the elongation, verī-ya is nirai-nirai and produces nirai onru āciriya-t-taḷai with the following foot.]

---

<sup>19</sup>The form vīntāṅku is found in the poem edited by Vaiyapuri Pillai.

(adverbial participle; suffixation;  
metrical fulfillment is concomitant)

kaṇiccipōṛ kōṭuciī (kali.101:8)

‘sharpening the (bull’s) horns like a trident’

[cīi < cī ‘to whittle, sharpen’ + i completive/past marker. Note that īi has resulted from adding the past marker i to the stem cī. It is not a true aḷapeṭai, because it does not reflect the elongation of ī. The īi here is a mere vowel cluster.]

**ūu:**

This juxtaposition occurs in three circumstances: (i) when the long vowel ū is elongated in the first syllable of the stem; (ii) when a suffix beginning with u or ū or a suffix beginning with a consonant is added to a monosyllabic stem or to a disyllabic stem with open syllables; (iii) when a word is added to a monosyllabic stem or to a disyllabic stem with open syllables to result in a noun-noun type of compound.

(adverbial participle; suffixation; metrical requirement)

vammenak kūuy (poru.101)

‘calling out saying “Come!”’

[kūuy < kū ‘to call out’ + y completive/past marker. The stem-final ū is elongated. It is a true aḷapeṭai. kū-uy is nēr-nēr and produces iyaṛcīr veṇ taḷai with the preceding foot. Compare the non-elongated form kūy in kali.38:8.]

(verb stem; metrical requirement)

cemmai pūuṇ ṭaṇṇvāḷtta [cemmai pūṇṭu aṇṇ vāḷtta] (pati.90:11-12)

‘assuming / taking up forthrightness, and blessed by Righteousness’  
[To be accurate, two lines from the poem have to be considered:

vāḷvali yuruttuc cemmai **pūuṇ** ṭaraṇvālṭta ‘making his enemies experience the might of his sword, **assuming** forthrightness, and blessed by Righteousness ...’ **pūuṇṭu** < **pūṇ** ‘to wear, assume’ + **t** past/completive marker + **u** adverbial participle suffix. Note that the adverbial participle form **pūuṇṭu** ‘assuming / taking up’ is spread across two **cīr** as **pūuṇ** ṭaraṇvālṭta (< **pūuṇṭu** + **aṇ** vālṭta). Also note that the vowel in the monosyllabic verb stem **pūṇ** is elongated. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. **pū-uṇ** is **nēr-nēr** and produces **nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai** with the preceding foot which is in the same line.]

(noun; metrical fulfillment is concomitant)

putu maṇa **makaṭūu**<sup>20</sup>

(*aka.141:14*)

‘newly-wed bridegroom’

(imperative/optative; causative stem; grammatical phenomenon; metrical fulfillment is concomitant)

taṇṇumaip pāṇi taḷarā **telūuka** [taṇṇumai p pāṇi taḷarātu eḷūuka]

(*kali.102:34*)

‘Make the rhythmic beat of the drum(s) rise.’

[**eḷūuka** ‘make rise’ < **eḷu** ‘to rise’ + **ka** imperative/optative suffix.

Note that the **ū** has resulted from the vowel **u** in the stem. Without the elongation, the form **eḷuka** ‘Rise!’ would be **nirai-nēr**. The elongation turns it into a causative meaning ‘make rise.’<sup>21</sup> It is a

<sup>20</sup> This word (**makaṭūu**) always appears with the elongated vowel and is considered as an **iyarkai aḷapeṭai** ‘natural/spontaneous elongation’ in the tradition. A similar word which is also considered to be an **iyarkai aḷapeṭai** is **āṭūu**. These words can be derived thus: **makaḷ** ‘girl; female child’ + **t** completive aspect marker + **u** nominalizing suffix > **makaṭūu**; **āḷ** ‘person; male’ + **t** completive aspect marker + **u** nominalizing suffix > **makaṭūu**.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. **eḷūtāl** ‘making it rise’ (**eḷu** ‘to rise’ + **tal** verbal noun suffix) in *Tolkāppiyam*, *eḷuttatikāram*, *Nacciṇārkkīṇiyam*, Rule 6. Also note that the form **paṭēṇ** (**paṭu** ‘to befall’ + **ēṇ** PNG) occurring in *oruṅku akappaṭēṇ āyiṇ* ‘if I let (them) not be caught’

true **aḷapeṭai**. **teḷū-uka** is **nirai-nirai** and produces **iyarcīr veṇ taḷai** with the preceding foot.]

(infinitive; suffixation; no metrical significance)

**vārik kuralpīḷiyūu** (aka.8:15-16)

‘combing and wringing your tresses’

[**pīḷiyūu** ‘wringing’ < **pīḷi** ‘to twist/wring’ + **y** glide + **ūu** infinitive suffix. The short vowel **u** in the cluster **ūu** does not have a separate metrical status. It is not a true **aḷapeṭai**. **kural-pīḷi-yūu** is of the pattern **nirai-nirai-nēr** and produces **iyarcīr veṇ taḷai** with the preceding foot.]

(verbal noun; suffixation; no metrical significance)

**tuṇaṅkaiyañcīrt taḷūumarappa** [tuṇaṅkai am cīr t taḷūu maṛappa] (matu:160)

‘as (the women) forget the embracing dance of the rhythmic tuṇaṅkai’

[**taḷūu** ‘embracing’ < **taḷu** ‘to embrace’ + **u** verbal noun suffix.

Note that the suffix here is elongated. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. **taḷūu-marap-pa** is a foot of the pattern **nirai-nirai-nēr**.]<sup>22</sup>

---

(*pura*.72:9) is causative/effective. Thus, there is evidence to claim that the elongation of a vowel happened in this period for grammatical purposes also.

P.S. Subrahmanyam (1971:10) notes the **ī** in forms like **uṭṭi** ‘to make X wear’ (**uṭṭu** ‘to wear’ + **i** adverbial participle marker) as a “causative-producer.”

<sup>22</sup> Here, the line **tuṇaṅkaiyañcīrt taḷūumarappa** is called a **vañci aṭi**. Therefore, no metrical binding (**taḷai**) needs to be considered according to the earlier conventions of prosody. If the line was used in a different poem as an **āciriya aṭi**, the form **taḷū-u** could have functioned as a **cīr**: **tuṇaṅkai yañcīrt taḷūu maṛappa**. Then, the short **u** in **taḷūu** which symbolizes the elongation would be metrically significant, and the foot **taḷūu** would be **nirai-nēr** and produce **iyarcīr veṇ taḷai** with the following foot. This line can be used as an example to show that the meter **vañci** is similar to **āciriya**.

(compound; no metrical significance)

**kurūukka** ṇīraṭip pommāl peṇukuvir (malai:170)

‘You will get heaps of cooked millet which looks like **glossy eyes**.’

[**kurūukkaṇ** ‘glossy eyes’ < **kuru** ‘glaze, luster’ + **kaṇ** ‘eyes’; The stem-final **u** is elongated. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. **kurūuk-ka** is **nirai-nēr** and produces **iyarcīr veṇ taḷai** with the following foot. Compare **kurukkaṇ** in *kali.101:15* where there is no elongation.]<sup>23</sup>

**ēe**:

This juxtaposition occurs in three circumstances: (i) when the long vowel **ē** is elongated in the first syllable of the stem; (ii) when a suffix beginning with **ē** or **y** is added to a monosyllabic stem or to a disyllabic stem with open syllables; (iii) when a word is added to a monosyllabic stem or to a disyllabic stem with open syllables to result in a noun-noun type of compound.

(nominal form; metrical requirement)

**tēer** parantapulāṃ (pati.26:1)

‘land where **chariots** have spread’

[**tēer** < **tēr** ‘chariot(s)’. See the explanation given above in the case of **yāam**.]

(vocative; metrical fulfillment is concomitant)

**ēe** yōo veṇaviḷi yērpikka (pari.19:61)

‘as (she) called out “**Hey**” and “Oh” ...’

<sup>23</sup> Actually, some traditional commentators recognize this kind of clustering without referring to it as an **aḷapeṭai** for the purpose of lengthening. Cf. Naccīṇārkkīṇiyar’s commentaries on Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, Rule 261, and Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, ceyyūḷiyal, Rule 17, where he refers to it as **puṇarcci vakaiyān eḷuttu-p-pēru ākiya aḷapeṭai** ‘**aḷapeṭai**, which is an added letter, obtained by conjoining.’

[**ēe** < **ē** 'Hey!'] The long **ē** is elongated. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. **ē-e** is **nēr-nēr** and produces **nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai** with the following foot.]

(verbal noun; grammatical; metrical fulfillment is concomitant)

**cēe ruṟṟa ... maṟavar** (*pati.41:11*)

'warriors who were gathered'

[**cēer** 'joining, gathering' < **cēr** 'to gather, join.' The elongation of **ē** to **ēe** turns the verb **cēr** into a verbal noun. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. **cē-e** is **nēr-nēr** and produces **nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai** with the following foot.]

(negative personal verb; suffixation; metrical requirement)

**cāra viṭēen viṭukkuven āyin** (*narr.350:5-6*)

'I will not let (you) approach (me). If I did, ...'

[**viṭēen** < **viṭu** 'to let happen/go' + **ēn** PNG. It is also possible to take the form **viṭēen** as a participial noun in this context. In any case, note that the **ē** in the suffix is elongated. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. The form **viṭēn** would not qualify as a foot whereas **viṭē-en** is **nirai-nēr** and produces **iyarcīr ven taḷai** with the following foot.]

(adverbial participle; suffixation; no metrical significance)

**pūkkō ḷeṇavēeyk kayampuk kaṇaṇē** (*pura.341:9*)

'He commanded "It's time for wearing flowers" and entered the pond (for bathing).'

[**ēey** 'having commanded; commanded and ...'

< **ē** 'to command/order' + **y** past/completive marker

Here, the short **e** symbolizes the elongation of the stem **ē**. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. However, the **e** in **ēe** does not have any separate metrical value. The foot **ḷeṇavēeyk** is **nirai-nēr** and produces **iyarcīr ven taḷai** with the following foot. Compare **ēey** in *pati.11:13* where

the short *e* which symbolizes the elongation of the stem *ē* has metrical significance.]

(compound; no metrical significance)

**pēerpakaiyeṇa vonṇenkō** (pura.136:5)

‘Shall I say that there is hostility such as lice in our clothes?’

[**pēerpakai** ‘enmity/hostility from lice’ < **pēṇ** ‘louse’ + **pakai** ‘hostility, enmity.’ The *ē* in the stem is elongated. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. **pēer-pakai-yeṇa** is **nēr-nirai-nirai** and would be considered as producing **onṇā-vañci-t-taḷai** by the later prosodic convention. **pēerpakaiyeṇa vonṇenkō** is a **vañci aṭi**. See footnote 22.]

**aii:**

This juxtaposition occurs in three circumstances: (i) when the long vowel *ai* is elongated in the first syllable of the stem; (ii) when a suffix beginning with *i* is added to a monosyllabic stem or to a disyllabic stem with open syllables; (iii) when a word is added to a monosyllabic stem to result in a noun-noun type of compound.

(vocative; metrical requirement)

**iṇappat tuṇintaṇir kēṇmiṇmaṇṇ raiiya**

[iṇappa t tuṇintaṇir kēṇmiṇ maṇṇu **aiiya**] (kali.2:10)

‘O lord, you are determined to leave. Listen, however.’

[**aiiya** < **aiya** ‘O lord!’ Without the elongation of *ai*, the form **aiya** could be construed as a single *nirai acai* or as a foot of the pattern **nēr-nēr (ai-ya)**. The elongation certainly makes **aiya** become a foot of the pattern **nēr-nirai** which subsequently produces **veṇṇīr veṇ taḷai** with the preceding foot. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**.]

(adjectival participle; suffixation;  
metrical fulfillment is concomitant)

iruṅkaḷi **tuḷaiiya** ĩmpuṛa nārai (narr.127:1)  
 ‘the crane, with a wet back, **which stirred** the dark backwaters’  
 [**tuḷaiiya** ‘that which stirred up’ < **tuḷa** ‘to stir up’ + **i** past/completive  
 marker + **y** glide + **a** adjectival participle suffix. Note that the **ai** in  
 the cluster **aīi** has resulted from the vowel **a** in the stem and that  
 the suffix **i** is added subsequently. It is not a true **aḷapeṭai** because  
 it does not reflect the elongation of **ai**. However, **tuḷai-īya** would be  
 scanned as **nirai-nirai**, in which case it would produce **iyarḷcīr veṇ**  
**taḷai** with the following foot. The next line in the poem has a similar  
**cīr**-pattern.]

(adverbial participle; suffixation;  
metrical fulfillment is concomitant)

ēṛrai puṭaittoṭu **puṭaiip** ... palavukkaṇi<sup>24</sup>  
 [ēṛrai puṭai t toṭupu uṭaii p ... palavu k kaṇi] (kuru.373:5-6)  
 ‘slammed on their sides by the male bear, the jack fruits **split open**  
 and ...’  
 [**uṭaii** ‘splitting open; breaking’ < **uṭai** ‘to break, split open’ + **i**  
 adverbial participle suffix. Note that the **ai** in the cluster **aīi** is the  
 same as the vowel **ai** in the stem. It is not a true **aḷapeṭai** because  
 it does not reflect the elongation of **ai**. However, **puṭai-ip** is **nirai-nēr**  
 and produces **nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai** with the following foot **pūnāru**  
 in the poem.]

<sup>24</sup> puṭaittoṭu **puṭaii** has to be understood as puṭaittoṭupu ‘slammed on their sides’ and **uṭaii**  
 ‘split open.’



(infinitive; suffixation; metrical fulfillment is concomitant)

nin ... taṭakkai ... iraiiya malarpu ariyā (pati.52:10-12)

‘your strong hands do not know opening up for begging’

[iraiiya ‘in order to beg’ < ira ‘to beg’ + iya infinitive suffix. Note that the ai in the cluster aii has resulted from the vowel a in the stem. It is not a true aḷapeṭai because it does not reflect the elongation of ai. However, irai-iya is nirai-nirai and produces nirai onru āciriya-t-taḷai with the preceding foot which occurs in the same line in the poem: irappōrkkuk kavita lallatai iraiiya.]

(compound; metrical requirement)

taiit tīnkaḷ

(kuru.196:4)

‘the month of Tai’

[taii < tai ‘the month of Tai.’ Note that the ai in the stem is elongated for meter. It is a true aḷapeṭai. Without the elongation, tai would not qualify as a foot. Now, tai-i is nēr-nēr and produces nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai with the following foot.]

ōo:

This juxtaposition occurs in two circumstances: (i) when the long vowel ō is elongated in the first syllable of the stem; (ii) when a suffix beginning with y is added to a monosyllabic stem.

(nominal form; metrical requirement)

kōol cemmaiyin cāṇrōr palki

(pura.117:6)

‘Since the (king’s) sceptre is (unswervingly) straight/perfect, the noble ones were many (in his country), and ...’

[kōol < kōl ‘staff/sceptre.’ See the explanation given above in the case of yāam. Here, kō-ol is nēr-nēr and produces nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai with the following foot.]

(vocative; metrical fulfillment is concomitant)

**ēe yōo veṇaviḷi yēṛpikka** (*pari.19:61*)

‘as (she) called out “Hey” and “Oh” ...’

[**ōo** < **ō** ‘Oh!’ The long **ō** is elongated and it is a true **aḷapeṭai**. **yō-o** is **nēr-nēr** and produces **iyarċīr veṇ taḷai** with the following foot.]

(adjectival participle; suffixation; metrical requirement)

**pōoya vaṇṭiṇāl pulleṇṇa turaiyavāy** (*kali.134:7*)

‘with the shore which turned desolate

because of the bees **which left**’

[**pōoya** ‘those which are gone’

< **pō** ‘to go’ + **y** past/completive marker + **a** adjp. suffix

The stem-final **ō** is elongated. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. Without the elongation, **pō-ya** would be **nēr-nēr** and produce **nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai** with the following foot. With the elongation, **pō-oya** is **nēr-nirai** and produces **iyarċīr veṇ taḷai** with the following foot.]

**ṇṇ:**

(nominal form; metrical requirement)

**maraṇṇ koṭṭi** (*malai:200*)

‘knocking on the trees’

[**maraṇṇ** < **maram** ‘tree.’ The final consonant of the noun **maram** is changed to **ṇ** because of the following **k**. Without the elongation, **maraṇ** would not qualify as a foot. With the elongation, the second consonant in **ṇṇ** achieves the status of a **nēr acai**. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. Thus, **maraṇ-ṇ** with the pattern **nirai-nēr** qualifies as a proper **ċīr** here. It produces **nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai** with the following foot.]

**ṇṇ:**

(noun; metrical requirement)

**kaṇṇ taṇṇṇeṇa k kaṇṭum kēṭṭum** (*malai:352*)

‘seeing with (your) eyes clearly and hearing pleasant sounds’

[**kaṇṇ** < **kaṇ** ‘eye’; Without the elongation, **kaṇ** would be a **nēr acai**, but cannot function as a foot. The elongation enables **kaṇ** to be a **nēr acai** and the second **ṇ** also to be a **nēr acai**. As a result, **kaṇ-ṇ** qualifies as a foot of the pattern **nēr-nēr** and produces **nēr onru āciriya-t-talai** with the following foot. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**.]<sup>25</sup>

**ṇṇ:**

(onomatopoeia; no metrical significance)

**kaṇṇ taṇṇṇeṇak kaṇṭum kēṭṭum**<sup>26</sup> (*malai:352*)

‘seeing with (your) eyes clearly and hearing pleasant sounds’

[The onomatopoeic word **taṇṇ**, derived from **taṇ** ‘cool, soothing’ + echo syllable **ṇ**, denotes the soothing effect of listening to pleasant sounds. The elongation **ṇṇ** in this word is not necessary here for fulfilling metrical requirement. It is to be treated as a part of the word **taṇṇ**. Thus, **taṇṇ-ṇeṇak** is to be taken as **nēr-nirai** producing **iyarcīr veṇ talai** with the following foot.]

**mm:**

(nominal form; metrical requirement)

**ceyymm mēval ciṟukaṇ paṇṇi** (*narr.98:2*)

‘small-eyed boar dwelling in the field’

[**ceyy** < **cey** ‘cultivated field.’ While **yy** is part of the elongated stem **cey**, **ym** results from joining **cey** and **mēval** ‘dwelling, residing.’]

<sup>25</sup> This example is discussed at length in “Theory of Classical Tamil Poetry.”

<sup>26</sup> See note 25.

Without any elongation, the word would be **ceym**, a **nēr acai**, which is not a metrical foot and therefore would not fulfill the metrical requirement in this context. If there is no elongation of **m**, the form **ceymm** would not produce any acceptable metrical pattern, because **cey** has to be separated from **y** and **m** (**cey-y-m**), which, in turn, does not fall into any acceptable pattern. So, the **m** also has to be elongated to result in **ceyymm**. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. Now, the form **ceyymm** cannot be scanned as **cey-y-mm** to result in **nēr-nēr-nēr**, because it would then be a **mū-acai-c-cīr** ‘a foot made up of three **acai**’ which is not proper to occur in this line. Therefore, the form **ceyymm** must be scanned as **ceyy-mm**. It is of the pattern **nēr-nēr** and produces **nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai** with the following foot. This example is one of a kind (hapax legomenon) in classical Tamil.]

II:

(nominal form; no metrical significance)

tāḷ ... **kolllēṛṛin** maruppuppōṇṛaṇa (*puṛa.4:3-4*)

‘The feet (of the warriors) were like the horns of a **killer-bull**.’

[**kollēru** < **kol** ‘to kill’ + **ēru** ‘bull’; The non-elongated form **kol-lē-rin** would be a **cīr** of the pattern **nēr-nēr-nēr**. With the elongation also, the form **koll-lē-rin** is a **cīr** of the pattern **nēr-nēr-nēr**. So, the elongation **ll** in **kolllēṛṛin** ‘of a killer-bull’ does not seem to be necessary for the meter. However, a few things must be remembered. First, the line is a **vañci aṭi**, so no metrical binding needs to be considered. Second, the elongation allows one to dwell on **ll** for a moment and place the next beat on **lē**. Thus, there would be four beats here, falling on the **acai** marked in bold type: **koll lēṛṛin maruppup pōṇṛaṇa**. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. See “Theory of Classical Tamil Poetry” where the whole poem is scanned and the beats are explained. One could also say that the elongation signifies the **mean-ness** of the killer-bull.]

**nn:**

(noun; metrical requirement)

terikōl **ñamann** pōla

(pura.6:9)

‘like the **pointer** of a scale’

[**ñamann** < **ñaman** ‘pointer.’ The stem-final **n** is elongated. It is a true **aḷapeṭai**. Without the elongation, **ñaman** here would not qualify as a foot. With the elongation, the second item in **nn** achieves the status of a **nēr acai** and thus the new form **ñaman-n** with the pattern **nirai-nēr** qualifies as a proper foot and produces **nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai** with the following foot.]

## PERSON-NUMBER-GENDER

**GENERAL:** Tamil Nouns and verbs fall into two major classes, namely, **uyar tiṇai** 'the high class/group' and **aḥṛiṇai** 'the non-high class/group.' The high class/group nouns and verbs are those which refer to the names and actions of human beings and gods, while the non-high class/group nouns and verbs denote the names and actions of other beings and objects like the animals, trees, etc. The first, second, and third are the three persons recognized through Tamil verbs and nouns. Usually, they are marked for the first person, second person, and third person. Two numbers, the singular and the plural, are used. In the category of the plural, the one that includes the listener can be understood as the "inclusive plural," the one that excludes the listener as the "exclusive plural." The plural form of a noun or a verb is also used for referring to a single person's identity or action when politeness or honor is intended; this type of plural-singular blend may be considered either as the "honorific singular" or as the "honorific plural." One could also call it the "polite" form. Masculine, feminine, and neuter are the three genders recognized.

The notions of person, number, and gender are integrated in the following way. The first and second person nouns and verbs are marked for their number but not for gender. Among the third person nouns and verbs, the “high class” (**uyar tiṇai**) nouns and verbs have masculine singular, feminine singular, and human plural forms, with no separate categories for masculine plural and feminine plural. A noun or verb referring to a group of females and males belongs to the category of “human plural.” In the “non-high class” (**aḥriṇai**) group, there are neuter singular and neuter plural nouns and verbs. In this group, no gender distinction is made. Some male and female animals do have separate names, but these names are not distinguished grammatically as “female nouns” and “male nouns.” All of them are neuter nouns, singular or plural.

#### THE PERSON-NUMBER-GENDER CATEGORIES

first person singular  
 first person inclusive plural/honorific  
 first person exclusive plural/honorific  
 second person singular  
 second person plural/honorific  
 third person masculine (singular)  
 third person feminine (singular)  
 third person human plural (masculine and feminine as a group)  
 (third person) neuter singular  
 (third person) neuter plural

Note that there is no formal difference between the categories of plural and honorific in the high class (**uyar tiṇai**) groups. Since the plural suffixes and the honorific suffixes are formally alike, context alone is the determinant when one has to distinguish the two. No honorific suffix in the neuter categories is found in classical Tamil poems.

Suffixes representing various person-number-gender categories are referred to as “person-number-gender suffixes” or simply “PNG” in this study. They are added to nominal and verbal stems, and are illustrated in the following sections.



## SINGULAR AND PLURAL

**GENERAL:** There are only two grammatical numbers in Tamil — singular and plural. An entity which is one in number is singular, and those which are more than one are plural. See also “Person-Number-Gender.”

**FORMATION:** The singular items are unmarked in the sense that they are taken to be the basic forms from which the plural forms are derived. Plural forms of nouns and verbs are derived by a suffixation process in which plural suffixes are added to various stems which are semantically and formally singular in number. Rarely, the plural suffix *kaḷ* is added to a noun which is already marked for plural. An example is given below. Plural suffixes are optional for neuter nouns and obligatory for human plural nouns. When the nouns are unmarked for plurality, their modifiers or verbs or the context in which they occur indicate the plurality. In the case of the finite verb forms, singular and plural suffixes are explicit.

The plural suffixes are **a**, **ā**, **ai**, **kaḷ**, **m**, **mar**, **mār**, and **r**.<sup>1</sup> They are found in nominals and verbals, and except for **kaḷ** and **mār**, in singular forms also. Moreover, **m** and **r** are preceded by a number of variant vowels. The letters preceding the suffix **a** and the vowels that precede **m** or **r** are items like a glide, tense/aspect marker, an augment, or that which indicates the person.

### EXAMPLES OF PLURAL NOUNS WITH PLURAL SUFFIXES

Formation mechanism: stem ± glide/**an**/**in** + suffix

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**a**:

(adjectival stem + glide + **a**)

**maṭava** ... **koṇṛai** (*kuṛu.66:1*)

[**maṭa** ‘gullible’; **maṭava** < **maṭa** + glide **v** + **a**]

‘The **koṇṛai** trees are **gullible**.’

(past stem + **a**)

**muṇivu ceyta ivaḷ** ... **tōlē** (*aiṅk.143:3*)

[**cey** ‘to do’; **ceyta** < **ceyt** + **a**]

‘Her shoulders **made** (me) agonize.’

‘Her shoulders **caused** agony.’

(non-past stem + **a**)

**aṛu kuḷam niraikkuna pōla** (*aka.11:13*)

---

<sup>1</sup> A neater way would be to posit the plural markers as just **a**, **ā**, **ai**, **kaḷ**, **m**, and **r**. Some might consider **mar** and **mār** as variants of one form, and therefore not list them as separate items. More comprehensive examples illustrating these suffixes are provided in the following pages in various sections.

[**nīrai** ‘to fill up’; **nīraikkuna** < **nīraikkun** + **a**]  
 ‘as if **they are filling up** a dry pond’

**ā:**

(bare verb stem + **ā**)

**nāñcil āṭā** (*pati.25:1*)  
 [**āṭu** ‘to move’; **āṭā** < **āṭu** + **ā**]  
 ‘the ploughs **will not move**’

**ai:**

(non-past stem + **avai**)

**uṭuppavai iraṇṭē** (*puṛa.189:5*)  
 [**uṭu** ‘to wear’; **uṭuppavai** non-past participial noun  
 < **uṭupp** + **avai**]  
 ‘Two are (the pieces of clothing) **that are** (normally) **worn.**’

**kaḷ:**

(singular noun + **kaḷ**)

**num iyaṅkaḷ** (*malai:277*)  
 [**iyam** ‘musical instrument’; **iyaṅkaḷ** < **iyam** + **kaḷ**]  
 ‘your **musical instruments**’

(plural noun + **kaḷ**)

**aivar eṇṇu ulaku ēttum aracarkaḷ** (*kali.25:3*)  
 [**aracan** ‘king’; **aracar** ‘kings’;  
**aracarkaḷ** < **aracar** + **kaḷ**]  
 ‘the **kings** who are praised by the world as “the Five (i.e., the Pāṇḍavas)” ’

**m:**

(pronoun)

**piritum nām** (*aka.5:28*)

[nām 'we'; here, first person honorific]  
 'We will depart.'

(nominal stem + glide + am)

**uḷaiyam** (aka.5:27)

[uḷai 'vicinity, nearby'; uḷaiyam < uḷai + glide y + am]  
 'We (first person honorific) are near (her).'

(past stem + an + am)

**kaṭintanam celavē** (aka.5:26)

[kaṭi 'to avoid'; kaṭintanam < kaṭint + an + am]  
 'We (first person honorific) avoided the journey.'

(past stem + ām)

**kaiyoṭu kōṭpaṭṭām** (kali.115:3)

[kōṭpaṭu 'to be caught'; kōṭpaṭṭ + ām]  
 'We were caught red handed.'

(past stem + ikum)

**kēṭṭikum** (pati.52:12)

[kēṭ 'to hear'; kēṭṭ + ikum]  
 'We heard.'

(non-past stem + um)

**kaṇṇum civakkum** (kuru.354:1)

[civa 'to become red'; civakk + um]  
 'The eyes too will be red.'

(non-past stem + um)

**yām avaṇiṇṇum varutum** (ciṛu:143)

[var 'to come'; varutum < varut + um]  
 'We come from there'

'We are coming from there.'

(past stem + **in** + **em**)

**curukkinem** kala-p-pai (pura.206:10)

[**curukku** ‘to string, tie up’; **curukki** + **in** + **em**]<sup>2</sup>

‘We have tied up our bags of musical instruments.’

(past stem + **ēm**)

**vēṭṭēmē** (aink.2:6)

[**vēḷ** ‘to wish for, pray’; **vēṭṭ** + **ēm**]

‘We prayed/wished for.’

(non-past stem + **ōm**)

**pulampoṭu** **terumaral** **uyakkamum** **tīrkuvōm** (pura.381:15-16)

[**tīr** ‘to vanish; to remove, cure’; **tīrkuv** + **ōm**]

‘We shall remove your loneliness and grief from wandering.’

**mar:**

(oblique stem + **mar**)

**patinmar** (kali.108:48)

[**pattu** ‘ten’; **patinmar** < **patin** oblique of **pattu** + **mar**]

‘ten people’

**mār:**

(singular noun + **mār**)

**tōlimārum** **yāṇum** (aka.15:9)

[**tōḷi** ‘female companion’; **tōlimār** < **tōḷi** + **mār**]

‘(my) female companions and I’

---

<sup>2</sup> An alternative analysis would be: **curukku** + **in** + **em**. See “The Past Personal Verbs” for considering the past stem to be **curukki**.

**r:**

(adjectival stem + glide + ar)

**maṛavar**

(narr.18:6)

[maṛam 'valor'; maṛavar < maṛa + glide v + ar]  
'warriors'

(nominal stem + glide + ar)

**nakaivar ... pakaivar**

(pura.398:9)

[nakai 'laughter'; pakai 'hostility, enmity';  
nakaivar < nakai + glide v + ar;  
pakaivar < pakai + glide v + ar]  
'allies/friends; ... enemies'

(nominal stem + glide + ar)

**valaiñar kuṭi**

(peru:274)

[valai 'net'; valaiñar < valai + glide ñ + ar]  
'residences of the people with (fishing) nets'

(non-past stem + ar)

**pāṭunarkku ... ikunar**

(pura.235:17)

[ī 'to give'; ikunar < ikun + ar]  
'those who give to the singers'

(non-past stem + ar)

**poṇ urai kāṇmar**

(matu:513)

[kāṇ 'to see, estimate, evaluate'; kāṇmar < kāṇm + ar]  
'those who estimate the value of gold from (its) rubbing (on a stone)'

(past stem + in + ar)

**nākaṇ kūriṇar**

(pura.179:12)

[**kūru** ‘to state, speak’; **kūrinar** < **kūri** + **in** + **ar**]<sup>3</sup>  
 ‘They spoke of Nākaṇ.’

(non-past stem + **avar**)

atari **koḷpavar** (matu:94)  
 [**koḷ** ‘to take hold, grasp’; **koḷpavar** < **koḷp** + **avar**]  
 ‘those who take hold of the hay’

(past stem + **ār**)

cāyttār talai (kali.39:25)  
 [**cāy** ‘to stoop, hang’; **cāyttār** < **cāytt** + **ār**]  
 ‘They put their heads down.’

(non-past stem + **an** + **ār**)

kālai āvatu ariyār mālai **enmanār** mayañkiyōrē (kali.119:15-16)  
 [**en** ‘to say’; **enmanār** < **enm** + **an** + **ār**]  
 ‘Those who say that it is evening, not knowing that it is morning,  
 are confused.’

(past stem + **ir**)

munnum **koṇṭir** (pura.203:5)  
 [**koḷ** ‘to receive’; **koṇṭir** < **koṇṭ** + **ir**]  
 ‘You received (gifts) previously also.’

(past stem + **ir**)

ellīrum eṇ **ceytir** (kali.142:15)  
 [**cey** ‘to do’; **ceytir** < **ceyt** + **ir**]  
 ‘What did you all do?’

---

<sup>3</sup> An alternative analysis would be: **kūru** + **in** + **ar**. See “The Past Personal Verbs” for considering the past stem to be **kūri**.

(past stem + *ōr*)**ceytōr ... kuṛi** (*aka.25:13*)[**cey** 'to make, set up'; **ceytōr** < **ceyt** + *ōr*]

'He (hon.) set up (a time for) our rendezvous.'

(non-past stem + *ōr*)**niṇaiyumōrē** (*narr.104:12*)[**niṇai** 'to think'; **niṇaiyumōr** < **niṇaiyum** + *ōr*]

'those who think (of ...)'

## EXAMPLES OF PLURAL NOUNS WITHOUT PLURAL SUFFIXES

**kaḷa ... puḷittāṇa viḷa ... paḷuniṇa** (*aka.394:1*)[**kaḷa**, **viḷa** kinds of fruits]'the **kaḷa** fruits turned sour; the **viḷa** fruits turned ripe'**ciṇai p pū** (*pura.11:4*)[**pū** 'flower']

'flowers on the branches'

**poyyum uḷavō** (*aka.48:19*)[**poy** 'lie']

'Are their lies too?'

**munṇūru ūr** (*pura.110:4*)[**ūr** 'town']

'three hundred towns'



## NOUNS

**GENERAL:** A noun is a name for a quality, person, time, place, thing, number, direction, or process/action. In this study, Tamil nouns are classified as pronouns, numerals, adjectival/appellative nouns, participial nouns, and verbal nouns. These nouns are declinable. That is to say that case markers can be added to them. Except for the numerals and verbal nouns, they are declined by person and gender. Note that the adjectival/appellative nouns are declinable whereas the adjectives are not. See "Pronouns" for the numeral pronouns distinguished by person in the Tamil of this period. See "Person-Number-Gender" for the various person, number, and gender categories.

**FORMATION:** All nouns appear to be derived from roots through the addition of formative suffixes. However, some nouns have recognizably meaningful parts, while others do not. In some cases, only one part in the noun is identifiable as a meaningful component. For practical purposes, it is useful to treat such nouns as given lexical items.

See also "Pronouns," "Numerals," "Adjectival Nouns or Appellative Nouns," and the chapters on participial nouns and verbal nouns.

## EXAMPLES

**All the parts in the noun are identifiable:**

**inmai** ‘non-existing’ < il ‘to be absent’ + mai (verbal noun suffix)  
(aka.1:14)

**murukan** (personal name) < muruku 'beauty, youth' + an PNG  
(aka.1:3)

**valaṅkunar** ‘passers by’  
 < **valaṅku** ‘to move around’ + **n** (non-past marker) + **ar** PNG  
 (aka.1:14)

Only one part in the noun is identifiable:

**kutirai** 'horse' < **kuti** 'to leap, hop' + **r** (glide?) + **ai** (aka.1:2)

**None of the parts in the noun is identifiable:**

**yānai** ‘elephant’ (aka.1:4)

nel 'grain' (aka.1:13)

## PRONOUNS

**GENERAL:** Pronouns substitute for other kinds of nouns. There are in classical Tamil personal, demonstrative/deictic, interrogative, and numerical pronouns. Personal pronouns substitute for names of people and neuter nouns. Demonstrative/deictic pronouns distinguish the location of items in reference to that of the speaker in terms of proximity, remoteness, or yonder (which includes unseen places). Interrogative pronouns are derived from **e** and **yā**, and convey the meanings ‘who?’, ‘what?’, ‘where?’, and ‘which?’. Numerical pronouns are derived from the numerals.

See “Person-Number-Gender” for the different categories of person, number, and gender. See “The Oblique Stem” for the oblique forms of pronouns. A consolidated list of the pronouns is given in the “Appendix.”

## EXAMPLES

## Personal Pronouns

	Singular	Inc. pl/hon.	Exc.pl/hon.
1st person	<b>nān</b> 'I' ( <i>pari.20:82</i> ) <b>yān</b> 'I' ( <i>kuṛi:12</i> )	<b>nām</b> 'we' ( <i>kuṛi:22</i> )	<b>yām</b> 'we' ( <i>malai:53</i> )
2nd person	<b>nī</b> 'you' ( <i>kuṛi:8</i> )		<b>nīyir</b> 'you' ( <i>aka.8:17</i> ) <b>nīr</b> 'you' ( <i>matu:738</i> )
3rd person	<b>tān</b> 'he' ( <i>malai:559</i> ) <b>tān</b> 'she' ( <i>narr.12:9</i> ) <b>tān</b> 'it' ( <i>kali.21:10</i> )		<b>tām</b> 'they' ( <i>matu:422</i> )  <b>tām</b> 'those things' ( <i>kali.9:19</i> )
Emphatic	<b>tān</b> 'it indeed' ( <i>kali.21:10</i> )		<b>tām</b> 'they indeed' ( <i>kali.9:19</i> )

	Singular	Inc. pl/hon.	Exc.pl/hon.
Reflexive	<b>atu</b> 'it' ( <i>pari.15:53</i> )		<b>avai</b> 'they' ( <i>pari.15:7</i> )
	<b>aḥtu</b> 'it' ( <i>aka.335:3</i> )		
	<b>tān</b> 'it' ( <i>pura.109:1; 173:3</i> )		<b>tām</b> 'they' ( <i>pura.257:10</i> )
	<b>tan</b> 'his' ( <i>kali.63:17</i> )		
	<b>tan</b> 'self' ( <i>aink 303:2</i> )		

### Demonstrative/Deictic Pronouns

	Number	Proximate	Remote	Yonder
3rd person masculine	singular	<b>ivan</b> 'he' ( <i>kuru.229:1</i> )	<b>avan</b> 'he' <sup>1</sup> ( <i>pari.20:82</i> )	<b>uvan</b> 'he' ( <i>pari.12:55</i> )
	plural/ honorific	<b>ivar</b> 'these boys' ( <i>pura.46:3</i> )	<b>avar</b> 'those men' ( <i>pari.5:40</i> )	

---

<sup>1</sup> The form **avan** was also used once to refer to a bird ("Garuda") associated with a deity (Vishnu): *pari.4:42*.

	Number	Proximate	Remote	Yonder
3rd person feminine	singular	<b>ivaḷ</b> ‘she’ ( <i>kuru</i> 229:1)	<b>avaḷ</b> ‘she’ ( <i>narr.</i> 159:8)	<b>uvaḷ</b> ‘she’ ( <i>pari.</i> 11:123)
	plural	<b>ivar</b> ‘these women’ ( <i>pura.</i> 201:1)	<b>avar</b> ‘those women’ ( <i>pari.</i> 7:44) <sup>2</sup>	
3rd person (unidentified)	plural	<b>ivar</b> ‘these people’ ( <i>narr.</i> 6:6)	<b>avar</b> ‘those people’ ( <i>pari.</i> 4:74)	
3rd person neuter	singular	<b>itu</b> ‘this one’ ( <i>narr.</i> 47:6)	<b>atu</b> ‘that one’ ( <i>narr.</i> 24:9)	<b>utu</b> ‘that one’ ( <i>narr.</i> 96:3)
		<b>iḥtu</b> ‘this one’ ( <i>kuru.</i> 158:6)	<b>aḥtu</b> ‘that one’ ( <i>kuru.</i> 18:3)	
	plural	<b>iv</b> ‘these ones’ ( <i>pari.</i> 4:33)	<b>av</b> ‘those ones’ ( <i>pari.</i> 4:33)	<b>uv</b> ‘those ones’ ( <i>pari.</i> 4:33)
		<b>ivai</b> ‘these ones’ ( <i>narr.</i> 12:7)	<b>avai</b> ‘those ones’ ( <i>pura.</i> 257:10)	

<sup>2</sup> In this context **avar** is used as a genitive form.

## Interrogative Pronouns

	Singular	Inc. pl./hon.	Exc.pl/hon.
1st person			<b>yārēm</b> 'who are we?' ( <i>kali.82:18</i> )
2nd person	<b>yārai</b> 'who are you?' ( <i>narr.395:1, 2</i> )		<b>yāvīr</b> 'who are you?' ( <i>puṛa.88:1</i> )
			<b>yārīr</b> 'who are you?' ( <i>puṛa.141:5</i> ) <sup>3</sup>
3rd person	<b>evaḷ</b> 'who?, which one?' feminine ( <i>pari.6:91</i> )		
	<b>ennaḷ</b> 'woman of what sort?' ( <i>narr.312:9</i> )		
	<b>yāraḷ</b> 'who?' ( <i>kuru.19:5</i> )		
	<b>yāvaḷ</b> 'who?' ( <i>aink.370:4</i> )		

---

<sup>3</sup> In this context the particle **ō** also occurs: **yārīrō**.

	Singular	Inc. pl./hon.	Exc.pl/hon.
3rd person masculine	<b>ennan</b> 'man of what sort?' ( <i>kuṛu.33:2</i> )		<b>ennar</b> 'men of what sort?' ( <i>narr.64:1</i> )
			<b>evaṇar</b> 'where is he?' 'man of which place?' ( <i>kuṛu.126:2</i> )
	<b>yār</b> 'who?' ( <i>puṛa.77:6</i> )		
3rd person unidentified			<b>yār</b> 'who?' ( <i>narr.269:9</i> )
			<b>yāvar</b> 'who?' ( <i>pati.20:21</i> )
3rd person neuter	<b>evan</b> 'what?' ( <i>narr.130:9</i> )		<b>ev</b> 'which ones?' ( <i>puṛa.187:3</i> )
	<b>evan</b> 'for what reason?' ( <i>kali. 60:14</i> )		
	<b>en</b> 'why?' ( <i>narr.334:9</i> )		
	<b>enna</b> 'what?' ( <i>aka.371:11</i> )		<b>yā</b> 'what?' ( <i>puṛa.167:9</i> )
	<b>enna</b> 'of what sort?' ( <i>narr.94:7</i> )		<b>yāvai</b> 'what?' ( <i>aka.42:7</i> )
	<b>ennatu</b> 'of what kind?, of any kind' ( <i>narr.219:3</i> )		



Singular	Inc. pl./hon.	Exc.pl/hon.
<b>ennai</b> ‘why?, how?’ ‘for what reason?’ ( <i>pari.6:94</i> )		
<b>enai</b> ‘what?’ ( <i>aka.369:1</i> )		<b>enai</b> ‘how many?’ ( <i>pura.301:7</i> )
<b>yātu</b> ‘what kind?, why?’ ( <i>pari.20:44</i> )		
<b>yāvaṇatu</b> ‘where?, how?’ ( <i>pura.301:8</i> )		
<b>yāvatu</b> ‘in what way?/how?’ ( <i>narr.331:11</i> )		

#### Demonstrative/Deictic and Interrogative Proforms<sup>4</sup>

Proximate	Remote/Yonder	Interrogative
<b>iṅku</b> ‘here’ ( <i>kuṛu.175:5</i> )	<b>aṅku</b> ‘there’ ( <i>kuṛi.97</i> )	<b>eṅku(m)</b> ‘where?’ ( <i>kali.144:16</i> )
		<b>eññāṇru</b> ‘when?’ ( <i>kali.110:16</i> )

<sup>4</sup> The term “proform” is borrowed from Schiffman (1983:39). Most of these forms function as adverbs.

Proximate	Remote/Yonder	Interrogative
	<b>attuṇai</b> 'that much' ( <i>kuṛi.13</i> )	<b>ettuṇai</b> 'how much?' ( <i>pura.141:13</i> )
<b>impar</b> 'here' ( <i>pura.287:14</i> )	<b>ampar</b> 'yonder' ( <i>peru.117</i> )	
	<b>umpar</b> 'yonder' ( <i>narr.198:3</i> )	
<b>ivaṇ</b> 'here' ( <i>narr.4:5</i> )	<b>avaṇ</b> 'there' ( <i>ciru.143</i> )	<b>evaṇ</b> 'where?' <sup>5</sup> ( <i>kuṛu.126:2</i> )
<b>inaṇi</b> 'of this nature' ( <i>narr.349:5</i> )	<b>anaṇi</b> 'of that nature' ( <i>narr.70:6</i> )	<b>enaṇi</b> 'of what nature?' ( <i>pura.136:15</i> )
		<b>enaṇi</b> 'how many' ( <i>pura.301:7</i> )
<b>inru</b> 'this day' ( <i>narr.48:1</i> )	<b>anru</b> 'that day, then' ( <i>aka.19:1</i> ) 'any day'	<b>enrum</b> 'what day?' ( <i>narr.1:2</i> ) <sup>6</sup>
<b>inrai</b> 'this day' ( <i>kuṛu.199:6</i> )	<b>anrai</b> 'that day' ( <i>narr.48:1</i> )	

<sup>5</sup> From **evaṇar** 'Where is he?' (*kuṛu.126:2*).

<sup>6</sup> The actual form attested is **enrum** 'forever.'

Proximate	Remote/Yonder	Interrogative
<b>īṅkaṇ</b> 'here' ( <i>narr.70:7</i> )	<b>āṅkaṇ</b> 'there' ( <i>pati.23:24</i> )	<b>yāṅkaṇum</b> 'anywhere' ( <i>aka.7:3</i> )
	<b>ūṅkaṇ</b> 'yonder' ( <i>narr.246:1</i> )	
<b>īṅku</b> 'here' ( <i>pura.36:11</i> )	<b>āṅku</b> 'there' ( <i>pari.6:104</i> )	<b>yāṅkum</b> 'everywhere' ( <i>pura.56:15</i> ) <sup>7</sup>
	<b>āṅku</b> 'then' ( <i>pura.152:21</i> )	
	<b>āṅkē</b> 'then' ( <i>kali.90:15</i> )	
	<b>ūṅku</b> 'before, then' ( <i>narr.101:9</i> )	
<b>īṅku</b> 'in this manner' ( <i>narr.55:12</i> )	<b>āṅku</b> 'in that manner' ( <i>kali.18:7</i> )	<b>yāṅku</b> 'in what way?' ( <i>narr.29:6</i> )
		<b>yāṅkaṇam</b> 'in what way?' 'how?' ( <i>pura.30:11</i> )
		<b>yāṅṇaṇam</b> 'in what way?' 'how?' ( <i>narr.338:6</i> )

---

<sup>7</sup> Most examples of **yāṅku** mean 'in what manner?; how?.'

Proximate

**īṇṭu** 'here'  
(*puṛa.38:16*)

**īṇṭai** 'here'  
(*kuṛu.54:1*)

**ītōli** 'here'  
(*kali.117:13*)

**īṇ** 'here'  
(*aiṇk.401:5*)

Remote/Yonder

**āṇṭu** 'there'  
(*puṛa.38:16*)

**āṇṭai** 'there'  
(*kali.20:16*)

**ñāṇkar** 'that time'  
(*peru.196*)

**ñāṇru** 'that day'  
(*narr.218:1*)

**ñāṇrai** 'that day'  
(*narr.287:7*)

Interrogative

**yāṇṭu**  
'where?'  
(*puṛa.86:3*)

**yāṇṭu**  
'where?'  
how?'  
(*narr.110:9*)

**yāṇṭai**  
'where?'  
(*kuṛu.379:1*)

**Numeral Pronouns:** These pronouns are derived by adding PNG to the oblique forms of the numerals.<sup>8</sup>

First person	Second person	Third person
'one' singular		masculine
		<b>ottan</b> 'one man' ( <i>kali.61:1</i> )
		<b>oruvan</b> 'one man' ( <i>aka.110:14</i> )
	<b>oru nī</b> 'you alone' ( <i>tiru.294</i> ) <sup>9</sup>	<b>oru tān</b> 'he alone' ( <i>puṛa.76:13</i> )
<b>oruvanēn</b> 'I, one person' ( <i>kali.140:12</i> )	<b>oruva</b> 'you, one person' ( <i>tiru.262</i> )	
		feminine
		<b>otti</b> 'one woman' ( <i>kali.143:8</i> )
<b>ōr yān</b> 'I alone' ( <i>kuṛu.6:4</i> ) <sup>10</sup>		<b>orutti</b> 'one woman' ( <i>puṛa.144:11</i> )

<sup>8</sup> All the attested numerical pronouns are given here. See "Numerals" for the oblique forms of the numerals.

<sup>9</sup> Note that no PNG is added to the oblique stem **oru**.

<sup>10</sup> Note that no PNG is added to the oblique stem **ōr**.

First person honorific	Second person	Third person
	<b>oruvir</b> 'you' ( <i>malai:218</i> )	<b>orubar</b> 'one person' ( <i>aiṅk.64:3</i> )
	<b>oruvīr</b> 'you' ( <i>puṛa.45:5</i> )	
'two' <b>iruvām</b> 'we two' ( <i>kuṛu.237:4</i> )	<b>iruvīr</b> 'you two' ( <i>puṛa.45:6</i> )	<b>iruvar</b> 'two people' ( <i>aiṅk.64:3</i> )
<b>iruvēm</b> 'we two' ( <i>kuri:21</i> )		
'three'	<b>inūvir</b> 'you three' ( <i>puṛa.109:2</i> )	<b>mūvar</b> 'three people' ( <i>poru:54</i> )
'four'		<b>nālvar</b> 'four people' ( <i>aka.86:12</i> )
'five'		<b>aivar</b> 'five people' ( <i>tiru:254</i> )
'six'		<b>aṛuvar</b> 'six people' ( <i>tiru:255</i> )

First person	Second person	Third person
'seven'		<b>e<u>l</u>uvar</b> 'seven people' ( <i>ciru:113</i> )
'eight'		<b>e<u>n</u>mar</b> 'eight people' ( <i>pari.8:5</i> )
'nine'		<b>o<u>n</u>pa<u>t</u>i<u>n</u>mar</b> 'nine people' ( <i>pati.pati.5:19</i> )
'ten'		<b>pa<u>t</u>i<u>n</u>mar</b> 'ten people' ( <i>pari.8:4</i> )
'eleven'		<b>pa<u>n</u>no<u>r</u>uvar</b> 'eleven people' ( <i>pari.8:7</i> )
'thirty three'		<b>pa<u>t</u>i<u>n</u>o<u>r</u>u<u>m</u>uvar</b> '33 people' ( <i>tiru:167</i> )
'hundred'		<b>īraim<u>pa</u>t<u>i</u>n<u>ma</u>r</b> '100 people' ( <i>peru:415</i> ) <b>nū<u>r</u>ruvar</b> 'The Hundred' ( <i>kali.52:2</i> )

## SECTION 2





## THE OBLIQUE STEM

**GENERAL:** See “A Note on Stems” in “Morphophonemics.” The form a nominal stem assumes before adding a case marker, postposition, particle, or another nominal is here called the “oblique stem.” Besides serving as a base for a case marker, postposition, particle, or another noun, the oblique stem provides a genitive, accusative, instrumental, locative, or directional meaning in classical Tamil.

**FORMATION:** The oblique stem of a plural noun is not different from its non-oblique stem. The oblique stems of singular nouns are formally different from their corresponding non-oblique stems in many instances. These forms are normally treated as given lexical items or as derived by

suffixing one of the “inflectional increments” **akku**, **attu**, **am**, **an**, **ān**, **ikku**, **in**, **on**, **varru** etc.<sup>1</sup> This study considers the oblique stem as derived in two ways:

- (i) by stem mutation. This type of oblique stem is here referred to as the “mutated oblique stem.” See “Formation Mechanisms” and “Morphophonemics” for stem mutation.
- (ii) by suffixation: **an** or **in** is suffixed to the nominal stem.

The oblique stems of personal pronouns and other nominals are given below. See “Numerals” and “Adjectives or Noun Modifiers” for information on the oblique stems of numerals and adjectives.

The Oblique Stems of Personal Pronouns: These forms contain short vowels and **n** or **m** indicating singularity and plurality respectively.

	Non-Oblique Stem	Oblique Stem
1st sg.	<b>nān</b> ‘I’ ( <i>pari.20:82</i> )	<b>en</b> ‘my’ ( <i>narr.355:10</i> )
1st sg.	<b>yān</b> ‘I’ ( <i>kuṛi:12</i> )	<b>en</b> ‘my’ ( <i>narr.355:10</i> )
1st pl. excl.	<b>yām</b> ‘we’ ( <i>malai:53</i> )	<b>em</b> ‘our’ ( <i>narr.150:7</i> )

<sup>1</sup> In the tradition, the “inflectional increments” are known as the **cāriyai**. **akku**, **attu**, **am**, **an**, **ān**, **ikku**, **in**, **on**, and **varru** are the **cāriyai** listed in the *Tolkāppiyam* (eḷuttatikāram, ḷampūraṇam, Rule 120). *Naṇṇūl* (Rule 244) lists **an**, **ān**, **in**, **al**, **arru**, **irru**, **attu**, **am**, **tam**,

1st pl. incl.	<b>nām</b> 'we' ( <i>kuṛi</i> :22)	<b>nam</b> 'our' ( <i>aiṅk</i> .39:2)
2nd sg.	<b>nī</b> 'you' ( <i>tiru</i> :64)	<b>nin</b> 'your' ( <i>tiru</i> :272) <b>un</b> 'your' ( <i>aka</i> .222:2) <b>tan</b> 'your' ( <i>puṛa</i> .387:14)
2nd pl.	<b>nīr</b> 'you' ( <i>matu</i> :738)  <b>nīyir</b> 'you' ( <i>aka</i> .8:17)	<b>num</b> 'your' ( <i>pari</i> .20:85) <b>um</b> 'your' ( <i>pari</i> .20:84) <b>num</b> 'your' ( <i>pari</i> .20:85) <b>um</b> 'your' ( <i>pari</i> .20:84)
3rd sg.	<b>tān</b> 'he' ( <i>malai</i> :559)	<b>tan</b> 'his' ( <i>aiṅk</i> .480:3) <b>tan</b> 'its' ( <i>kali</i> .67:3)
3rd pl.	<b>tām</b> 'they' ( <i>matu</i> :422)	<b>tam</b> 'their' ( <i>puṛa</i> .153:12)

---

**nam**, **num**, **ē**, **a**, **u**, **ai**, **ku**, and **n** as the **cāriyai**. Traditional grammarians use these inflectional increments to explain oblique forms.

### The Oblique Stems of Nominals Which Are Not Personal Pronouns:<sup>2</sup>

- (i) Non-monosyllabic nouns ending with **m** have mutated oblique stems ending with **tt(u)**.
- (ii) Nouns ending with **tu** have mutated oblique stems ending with **tt(u)**.
- (iii) The pronouns **atu** 'that one' and **itu** 'this one' have oblique stems **atan** and **itan** respectively.<sup>3</sup>
- (iv) The pronoun **avai** 'they (neuter), those things', non-monosyllabic nouns ending with **l**, and nouns ending with **ru** have their mutated oblique stems ending with **rru**.
- (v) Other nouns, including the demonstrative/deictic pronouns, keep their non-oblique stems to serve as oblique stems.

### EXAMPLES

#### Oblique Stems of Pronouns:

(First person singular; genitive meaning)

**en** **tōli** **mēni**

(*kuri*:2)

[**en** < **yān** 'I']

'my friend's body'

(First person exclusive plural; genitive meaning)

**em** **tol** **pati**

(*malai*:567)

[**em** < **yām** 'we']

'our ancient town'

<sup>2</sup> These forms include the demonstrative/deictic pronouns, and all are illustrated below.

<sup>3</sup> By extension, \***etan** 'which one's?'; **atin** 'that one's'; \***itin** 'this one's'; and \***etin** 'which one's?' Example: **atin** *varavu* 'its arrival' (*pari.11:36*).

(First person honorific plural; accusative meaning)

**aṇṇu nam aṇṇiyāy** (aka.33:18)  
 [nam < yām 'I (hon.)']  
 'You did not know me then.'

(Second person singular; genitive meaning)

**uṇ mēṇi āy nalam** (aka.222:2-3)  
 [uṇ < nī 'you']  
 'your body's subtle loveliness'

(Second person singular; genitive meaning)

**viṇṇaliyar nīṇ puṇṇam curra** (malai:46)  
 [nīṇ < nī 'you']  
 'as the dancing women surround your side'

(Second person honorific; genitive meaning)

**aḥtu um maṇai** (aka.56:14)  
 [um 'your' < uṇ 'your']<sup>4</sup>  
 'That is your house.'

---

<sup>4</sup> It is more logical to derive **um** ('your' plural) from **uṇ** ('your' singular) rather than from **nīṇ** ('you' plural).

(Second person plural; genitive meaning)

**num** **iyam** (*malai:232*)

[**num** ‘your’ < \***nuṇ** ‘your’]<sup>5</sup>

‘your musical instruments’

(Third person singular; unmarked for gender; genitive meaning)

**yāmai tan pārppu** **ōmpa** (*poru:186*)

[**tan** < **tāṇ** ‘it’]

‘as the turtle protects its young one’

(Third person honorific/plural; genitive meaning;

base for associative case marker **oṭu**)

**tam peyar tammoṭu** **koṇṇaṇar māyntōr** (*malai:553*)

[**tam** < **tām** ‘they’]

‘those who died taking away with them their (own) names’

(Third person masculine singular; genitive meaning)

**ivan** ... **koṭum col** **ōmpumīṇ** (*narr.200:10-11*)

[**ivan** ‘(this) he’]<sup>6</sup>

‘Keep away from his cruel words.’

---

<sup>5</sup> It is more logical to derive **num** (‘your’ plural) from \***nuṇ** (‘your’ singular) rather than from **nīyir** (‘you’ plural). Nevertheless, Tolkāppiyam derives **num** (‘your’ plural) from **nīyir** (‘you’ plural/honorific). Cf. Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, Iḷampūraṇam, Rule 327.

<sup>6</sup> The other forms are **avan** (‘that) his’ (*pati.56:3*) and **avar** (‘that) his (hon.)’ (*kuṟu.392:2*). For more on pronouns, see “Pronouns.”

(Third person feminine singular; genitive meaning)

**ivaḷ paṇi vār kaṇ** (aka.77:19)  
 [ivaḷ '(this) she']<sup>7</sup>  
 'her eyes which are shedding tears'

(Third person human plural; genitive meaning)

**ivar maṛaṇ** (pura.337:19)  
 [ivar 'these people']  
 'their valor'

(Third person neuter singular; genitive meaning)

**ataṇ niṛam** (kali.52:3-4)  
 [ataṇ < atu 'that one' + aṇ]  
 'its body (chest)'

(Third person neuter plural; base for the postposition uḷ)

**avarṛuḷ** (pati.43:4)  
 [avarṛ < avai 'those things']  
 'among them / those things'

#### Oblique Stems Of Non-Pronouns:

**poṇ-am-kompu** (pari. 7:56)  
 [poṇ 'gold']  
 'golden vine (-like woman)'

(Note that the oblique stem [poṇ] is the same as the nominal stem [poṇ]. It serves as the base for the particle **am**, which here provides a comparative sense.)

---

<sup>7</sup> The other forms are **avaḷ** '(that) her' (aink.378:3) and **evaḷ** 'whose?.' No example of **evaḷ** used in an oblique sense is found.



**cēṭṭirunkō**

(*puṛa.201:13*)

[cēṭṭ mutated oblique < cēṇ ‘large, lofty’]

‘big, lofty king’

(cēṭṭ serves as the base for the adjective **iru[m]** ‘big’ in forming a compound noun.)

**ōr yāṭṭu oru kāl**

(*kali.71:26*)

[yāṭṭu mutated oblique < yāṇṭu ‘year’]

‘once in one year’

(yāṭṭu provides a locative [temporal] sense.)

**cōṇāṭṭu ... uppiṇ kollai cārri**

(*paṭṭ:28-29*)

[cōṇāṭṭu < cōl(a) ‘the cōla dynasty’ + nāṭṭu;

nāṭṭu mutated oblique < nāṭu ‘country’]

‘announcing the abundance of the salt in the Cōla country’

(cōṇāṭṭu provides a locative [spatial] sense.)

**cenmō ... em ... nāṭṭu**

(*puṛa.381:5*)

[nāṭṭu mutated oblique < nāṭu ‘country’]

‘We shall go to our country.’

(nāṭṭu provides a directional sense.)

**annattu c cēval**

(*matu.386*)

[annattu mutated oblique < annam ‘goose’]

‘the male of the goose’

(annattu provides a genitive sense.)

**kaṭāattu avan yānai**

(*kali.57:18*)

[kaṭāatt mutated oblique < kaṭā(a)m ‘rut’]

‘his elephant in rut’

(kaṭāattu provides a genitive sense.)

**vaḷḷattu p peyta pāl** (kali.72:3)

[**vaḷḷattu** mutated oblique < **vaḷḷam** 'bowl']

'the milk poured into the bowl'

(**vaḷḷattu** provides a locative [spatial] sense.)

**vētattu maṛai nī** (pari.3:66)

[**vētattu** mutated oblique < **vētam** 'The Vedas']

'You are the secret in the Vedas.'

(**vētattu** provides a locative [spatial] sense.)

**uyarntōr ulakattu p peyarntaṇaṇ** (pura.174:20)

[**ulakattu** mutated oblique < **ulakam** 'world']

'He proceeded/moved toward the world of the nobles.'

(**ulakattu** gives a directional sense.)

**ēṛru valaṇ uyariya ... maṇi miṭarṇōṇ** (pura.56:1-2)

[**ēṛru** mutated oblique < **ēṛu** 'bull']

'the one with dark-colored throat (Śiva), who is carrying in his right hand (a flag on which) a bull (is painted)'

(**ēṛru** gives an accusative sense.)

**pūṇ kayirṛu vāṅki** (pari.19:31)

[**kayirṛu** mutated oblique < **kayirū** 'rope']

'pulling with a rope of flowers'

(**kayirṛu** provides an instrumental sense.)

**ñāyirṛu ... vanappu** (pari.13:1-2)

[**ñāyirṛu** mutated oblique < **ñāyirū** 'sun']

'the beauty of the sun'

(**ñāyirṛu** gives a genitive sense.)

niṇ vemmaiyum viḷakkamum **ñāyirruḷa**

(*pari.4:25*)

[See previous example.]

‘Your warmth and brilliance are **in the sun.**’

(**ñāyirru** here gives a locative [spatial] sense.)

veṇ maṇarru aka **vayin**

(*narr.372:6*)

[**maṇarru** mutated oblique < **maṇal** ‘sand’]

‘inside **the white sand**’

(**maṇarru** gives a locative [spatial] sense.)

**vayirru-t-tī**

(*pura.74:5*)

[**vayirru** mutated oblique < **vayiru** ‘stomach’]

‘the **fire in the stomach**; hunger’

(**vayirru** is the base for the noun **tī** ‘fire’; gives a locative sense.)

## CASE MARKERS AND POSTPOSITIONS

GENERAL: Tamil uses case markers or case suffixes and postpositions as prepositions are employed in English. The tradition identifies seven or eight grammatical cases.<sup>1</sup> Each grammatical case is represented by more than one marker, and one marker may represent more than one meaning. The case markers and the postpositions have similar functions, and therefore are treated under one heading in this study. Postpositions, unlike the case markers, are items which are meaningful even when used in isolation. When used in isolation, they give the sense of a location or time. Sometimes they are written separately from the nouns they follow.

---

<sup>1</sup> The tradition refers to grammatical case as **vēṟṟumai** 'distinction.' According to the *Tolkāppiyam*, there are seven basic cases, and the vocative is considered to be the eighth (*collatikāram*, Rules 62 and 63). The cases are: **peyar/eluvāy** (= nominative), **ai** (= accusative), **oṭu** (= instrumental), **ku** (= dative), **atu** (= genitive, possessive), **kaṇ** (= locative), and **viḷi** (= vocative). Cf. *collatikāram*, Rule 64.

The term for a case marker is **vēṟṟumai urupu** "identifier of distinctions" or "marker that differentiates." There is no traditional term for postposition. As a group, the case markers and postpositions are referred to by the term **iṭaicol** "medial particles" (*Tolkāppiyam*, *collatikāram*, *Cēṇāvaraiyam*, commentary on Rule 250).

Most case markers, on the other hand, are not meaningful when used in isolation; they are suffixed to and written together with the nouns. The few exceptions are **koṇṭu**, **uṭaṇ**, and **kaṇ**, which could as well be considered as postpositions. The various significations given below for the case markers and the postpositions were inferred from the literary contexts in which they appear. It is quite possible to have more than one interpretation in some instances.

**FORMATION:** The case markers are optionally suffixed to a nominal in its non-oblique or oblique form.<sup>2</sup> The postpositions follow a nominal in its non-oblique form, oblique form, associative case form, or dative case form. They also follow an adjectival participle and rarely a verb stem. Neither the singular-plural distinction nor the person-number-gender distinction is made by the case markers or postpositions.

#### EXAMPLES OF ITEMS UNMARKED BY A CASE MARKER

(‘subject’)

**pacittanṛamma ... ūrē**<sup>3</sup> (pura.318:3)  
 ‘The town (i.e., people) was hungry.’

(accusative)

**curṛamum emmum uḷḷāl** (aka.17:6)  
 ‘She did not think of me and (her) companions.’  
**onnār k kaṭantu aṭṭāṇ** (pari.15:44-45)  
 ‘He crossed and defeated/killed the enemies.’

<sup>2</sup> See “The Oblique Stem” for information on oblique forms.

<sup>3</sup> In modern Tamil it would be **ūrukku p pacittatu** which might be considered as a subject in the dative case.

(instrumental)

**kai cuṭṭi** (pari.9:35)  
 ‘pointing with (his) hand’

(associative)

**kēḷir t tiḷaikkum** (pari.11:58)  
 ‘(They) mingle with their friends.’

(locative)

**mēni t tiru ... amarnta mārpinaḷ** (pari.1:7-8)  
 ‘You have a chest on the surface of which Tiru (goddess of prosperity) has taken abode.’

(ablative)

**vaḷi niṅka** (pari.19:32)  
 ‘to move away from the path’

(directional)

**poruṭpiṇi p pirinta nī** (aka.79:17)  
 ‘you, who have moved/departed toward the obsession of wealth’

Note that in many of these examples a hard consonant (**k**, **c**, **t**, or **p**) is doubled between the two items entering into a case relation. The first of these two items does not contain a case marker and the second item which follows the first is either a verb or a noun holding a case relation with the first. The initial consonant, (**k**, **c**, **t**, or **p**), of the second item is doubled signifying its case relation with the first. Only the context determines the meaning of the case.

### *Case Markers and Postpositions*

The case markers and the postpositions found in classical Tamil are: **a**, **akku**, **akam**, **atu**, **ayal**, **aḷavu**, **aḷavai**, **aṇ**, **ā**, **āṅkaṇ**, **āṅku**, **ātu**, **āyitai**, **āl**, **āṇ**, **āru**, **iṭam/iṭaṇ**, **iṭai**, **il**, **iṇ**, **ukku**, **uṭaṇ**, **uṭai**, **uṭaiya**, **umpar**, **uḷi**, **uḷai**, **uḷ**, **u(ḷ)ḷum**, **uḷi**, **uḷ(ḷ)ē**, **ūṅkaṇ**, **ūṅku**, **ūṭu**, **ūḷ**, **etir**, **etirē**, **ellai**, **ē**, **ai**, **oṭu**, **ōṭu**, **k(k)(u)**, **kaṭai**, **kaṇ**, **kāl**, **kālai**, **kārum**, **kīḷ**, **koṇṭu**, **cār**, **cīrai**, **ñāṅkar**, **ñāṇru**, **ñāṇrai**, **talai**, **taṇ**, **tīram/tīraṇ**, **toru(m)**, **tōrum**, **naṭuvaṇ**, **nāppaṇ**, **ninru(m)**, **pakkam**, **paṭi**, **patam**, **pāṅkar**, **pāṭu**, **pāl**, **pin**, **pinrai**, **pinnar**, **pinnum**, **puṭai**, **polutu**, **pōḷtu**, **māṭṭu**, **māṭṭai**, **māṇ**, **māttiram**, **māttirai**, **micai**, **mītu**, **mīmikai**, **mutal (mutal)**, **muṇrai**, **mun(nar)**, **mēl(iruntu)**, **vayam**, **vayin**, **varai**, **vaḷi**, **vāy**, and **viyal**.

Some of these case markers and postpositions are variants of one another: e.g., **ñāṇru** and **ñāṇrai**. Also note that forms like **mēliruntu** < **mēl** + **iruntu** and **mīmikai** < **mī** + **micai** are made of two separate items.

### EXAMPLES OF CASE MARKERS AND POSTPOSITIONS

#### *Marker/ Meaning and Example*

#### *Postposition*

**a**: It is added to a nominal.

(genitive/possessive)

**avara** ... **kayam**

(*pura.15:9-10*)

[**avar** 'they']

'their ponds'

**ninna** **kaṇṇi**

(*pura.45:3*)

[**nin** oblique of **nī** 'you']

'your head-garland'

**akam:** It is added to a nominal. When used in isolation, it means ‘inside, interior.’

(temporal limitation: ‘within’)

eṇṇiya nāḷakam (aīnk.466:3)  
[nāḷ ‘day’]<sup>4</sup>  
‘within the marked day’

**atu:** It is added to a nominal. When used in isolation, it means ‘(that) it.’

(genitive/possessive)

kaṭavuḷatu iyaṛkai (malai:83)  
[kaṭavuḷ ‘god’]  
‘the god’s nature’

naṇṇinatu aḷavu (narr.378:12)  
[naṇṇin oblique of naṇṇu ‘friendship’]  
‘the extent of (his) friendship’

**ayal:** It is added to a nominal; it means ‘vicinity, other side, neighborhood.’

(locative [spatial]: ‘by the side of’)

malai ayal (narr.108:1)  
[malai ‘mountain’]  
‘by the side of the mountain’

niṇ katuppu ayal (aīnk.396:1-2)  
[katuppu ‘tresses’]  
‘on (one) side of your tresses’

---

<sup>4</sup> In modern Tamil, it would be nāḷukkuḷ or nāḷaikkuḷḷē.



**aḷavu:** It is added to a nominal or an affirmative adjectival participle; it means 'measure.'

(spatial limitation: 'up to the limit')

vaiyaka varai aḷavu (narr.130:11)  
[vaiyakam 'the earth'; varai 'limit, edge']  
'up to the limit of the earth'

(temporal limitation: 'till, until')

cey poruḷ murrum aḷavu (kali.24:12)  
[murrum adjp < murrū 'to complete']  
'until accomplishing the wealth'

**aḷavai:** It is added to a non-past/non-completive stem or an adjectival participle; it means 'measure.'

(temporal limitation: 'at the time, before [when it follows a negative participle]')

valippaḷavai (kali.17:6)  
[valipp non-past stem < vali 'to undertake']  
'when (you) undertake'

muyalvaḷavai (kali.17:10)  
[muyalv non-past stem < muyal 'to attempt']  
'when (you) attempt'

ceṇṇu piṇaḷ ākiya aḷavai (aka.189:10)  
[ākiya adjp < āku 'to become']  
'when she left (me and other kin) and became another woman (as a stranger)'

kaṇṇiyatu uṇarā aḷavai (aka.5:6)  
 [uṇarā negative adjp < uṇar 'to realize, know']  
 before realizing/knowing what (I) had decided'

**an**: It is added to a nominal.

(genitive)

atan niṇam (kali.52:3-4)  
 [atu 'that one']  
 'its chest'

**ā**<sup>5</sup>: It is added to a nominal denoting a location. It functions as an adverb of location.

(locative, spatial)

tāy arukā niṇṇu (pari.11:91)  
 [aruku 'near']  
 'standing near (your) mother'

karai mēlā (pari.12:34)  
 [mēl 'on']  
 'on the bank/shore'

---

<sup>5</sup> In modern written Tamil, it is āka. In spoken Tamil, it is just ā or ē: e.g., ōramā 'along the corner/side'; mēlē 'on top, above.'

**āṇkaṇ**: It is added to a nominal or a verb stem. When used in isolation, it refers to a location, meaning ‘there’ and has a variant, **aṇkaṇ** ‘inside.’<sup>6</sup>

(locative [spatial]: ‘at; on; there; near’)

potiṇi **āṇkaṇ**

(aka.1:4)

[**potiṇi**, name of a hill]

‘at Potiṇi’

avaṇ**āṇkaṇ** ceṇru

(kali.143:15-16)

[**avaṇ** ‘(that) he’]

‘going near him’

ilavattu **āṇkaṇ**

(aka.25:9)

[ilavattu oblique of **ilavam** ‘cotton tree’]

‘on the ilavam tree’

niḷal il **āṇkaṇ**

(narr.105:5)

[il ‘not to exist, to be absent’]

‘at that place where there is no shade’

**āṇku**: It is added to a nominal. See also “The Particles.”

(directional: ‘toward’)

nin**ṇāṇku** varūum eṇ neṇciṇai **enṇāṇku** vārātu ōmpīṇai koṇmē

(kali.23:18-19)

[**nin** oblique of **nī** ‘you’; **eṇ** oblique of **yāṇ** ‘I’]

‘Shield my mind, which is coming toward you so that it does not come toward me, and accept it.’ (The directional meaning is triggered by the verb of motion **var** ‘to come.’)

<sup>6</sup> **āṇkaṇ** maṇṇam pōntu ‘there, having arrived at the front yard’ (pati.23:24). pū **aṇkaṇ** ‘inside the flower’ (kali.71:2). It is possible to derive **āṇkaṇ** from **ām** adjp of **ā** ‘to be’ +

**ātu:** It is a variant of **atu**, and is added to a nominal.

(genitive/possessive)

puṛavil **taṇātu** ceṇ-katir-c-celvaṇ teṛutaliṇ (narr.164:1-2)

[**taṇ** oblique of **tāṇ** 'it']

'since **its own** red hot sun is scorching in the forest'

**āyiṭai:** It consists of two items, **ā** 'that' and **iṭai** 'middle.' It is used in isolation or follows a nominal or case marker.

(locative [spatial]: 'in between')

imayam teṇ-ṇ-aṇ-kumari-y-oṭu **āyiṭai** (pati.11:23-24)

[**kumariyoṭu** < **kumari** 'the Kumari' + glide **y** + **oṭu** associative marker 'with']

'there, between the Himalayas and the beautiful southern Kumari'

(locative [temporal]: 'at that time, thereupon')

**āyiṭai** māyital koṇṭu (pari.11:93)

[**āyiṭai** 'at that time, thereupon']

'Thereupon, (she) wore the dark (flower) petal (on her) ear and ...'

i-c-curam paṭartantōlē **āyiṭai** ... vaḷi vaḷi oṭi mey-t-talai-p-paṭutal  
ceyyēṇ (aka.7:13, 15-16)

[**āyiṭai** 'thereupon']

'She went through this forest. Thereupon, I did not follow her running all over the place.'

---

**kaṇ** 'place.'

**āl/āṇ:** It is added to a nominal.

(i) genitive

oḷ oḷi maṇi p **poriyāṇ** mañṇai (pari.18:7)  
 [p**ori** 'spots']  
 'peacocks **with** bright gem-like **spots**'

(ii) instrumental: 'because of, therefore'

aṛiyāmaiyāṇ maṇantu tuppū etirnta niṇ pakaivar (pati.15:14-15)  
 [aṛiyāmai 'ignorance']  
 'your enemies who forgetfully faced your strength **because of their**  
**ignorance**'

nī amarntu viḷaiyāṭiya **pōrāl** (pari.5:55-56)  
 [p**ōr** 'war']  
 '**because of the war** which you fought playfully'

naṇṇar naṇ moḷi kēṭṭaṇam **ataṇāl** ... evvam kaḷai (mull:17, 21)  
 [a**taṇ** oblique of **atu** 'that one'; a**taṇāl** 'because of that']  
 'We heard good words. **Therefore**, get rid of your grief.'

(iii) instrumental: 'with the help of, by'

aṭiyai t **talaiyiṇāl** toṭṭu (kali.108:55-56)  
 [t**alaiyiṇ** oblique of **talai** 'head']  
 'touching (his) feet **with** (my) **head**'

kaṇṇiṇāl eṇ neṇcam ... koṇṭu āṇṭāy (kali.108:28-29)  
 [k**aṇṇiṇ** oblique of **kaṇ** 'eyes']  
 'You reigned, getting hold of my heart **with the help of your eyes.**'

**vitiyārṛāl ākkiya mey-k-kalavai** (pari.7:20)

[**vitiyārṛ** oblique of **vitiyāru**

< **viti** ‘rules’ + **ārṛ** oblique of **āru** ‘manner’]

‘the fragrant body-paste made **by** (following) **the rules**’

(iv) associative: ‘with; to the accompaniment of’

**māru aṭu tānaiyāl tīraṇ ikantu varūum avar** (pari.13:30-31)

[**tānai** ‘army’]

‘they who transgressed good behavior and are arriving **with** (their) **army** that kills the enemies’<sup>7</sup>

**cila collāl pala kēḷviyar** (pura.360:2)

[**col** ‘words’]

‘those **with** few words and much listening’

**paraiyāl puṇal ceṇukkunar** (pati. 22:28)

[**parai** ‘drums’]

‘those who prevent the flooding **to the accompaniment of drums**’

(v) locative (spatial): ‘at; in; above; onto; toward; through’

**vīyā yāṇar niṇ vayingāṇē** (pati.36:1)

[**niṇ** oblique of **nī** ‘you’; **vayin** ‘place’]

‘**in your place**, with unfailing bounty’

**kīḷ nīrāṇ mīṇ vaḷaṅkuntu mī nīrāṇ ... malar pūkkuntu** (pura.396:1-2)

[**kīḷ nīr** ‘low/deep water’; **mī nīr** ‘top/high water’]

<sup>7</sup> This interpretation follows the traditional commentary. **tānaiyāl** could be taken as an instrumental form: ‘they, who transgressed good behavior **because of their army** that kills the enemies ...’

**‘The fish move around in the deep/low water; the flowers bloom in the high water.’**

**marattāl kalīṛu aṇaittu** (pati.33:3)  
 [maratt oblique of maram ‘tree’]  
 ‘tying the elephants onto the trees’<sup>8</sup>

**kunrattāl ... varavu** (pari.8:28)  
 [kunratt oblique of kunram ‘hills’]  
 ‘the passage/arrival ... through the hills’

**cēriyāl cenṛu** (kali.68:16-17)  
 [cēri ‘neighborhood’]  
 ‘going through the neighborhood’

(vi) locative (temporal/action): ‘at; in; while’

**ciṛu makilānum** (pati.19:12)  
 [makil ‘pleasure, joy’]  
 ‘even in short-time pleasure’

**alamarum polutinān** (kali.78:7)  
 [polutin oblique of polutu ‘time’]  
 ‘when ... being tossed around (by confusion)’

**naṇavinān** (kali.68:21)  
 [naṇavin oblique of naṇavu ‘wakeful state’]  
 ‘while being awake’

---

<sup>8</sup> This could be interpreted as an instrumental usage (“by”), depending upon how one understands the verb aṇai ‘to embrace, tie around.’

**kaṅkulān**

(kali.66:4)

[kaṅkul ‘night’]  
‘at night’

(vii) ablative: ‘from’

vārār eṇṇum pulavi uṭkoḷal ... oḷika ... niṇ neṅcattānē (narr.11:4-5)

[neṅcatt oblique of neṅcam ‘heart’]

‘Do not sulk because he (your lover) has not yet come. May the anger go away **from** your **heart**.’ (Note that the ablative sense is triggered by a verb of motion, oḷi ‘to go away.’)

**āru**: It is added to an adjectival participle; it means ‘path, way, mode.’

(adverb of place)

tāṇ vēṇṭum āru

(pari.11:110)

[vēṇṭum adjp < vēṇṭu ‘to wish for, want’; āru ‘path’]  
‘the place which it wanted’

**iṭam/iṭan**: It is added to an adjectival participle. Basically, it means ‘place.’

(locative [spatial]: ‘place’)

malai cuṭar cēra p pulampiya iṭan

(kali.126:1-2)

[pulampiya adjp < pulampu ‘to be desolate’]

‘the place which became desolate as the sun reached the mountain’

(locative [temporal]: ‘time’)

nām kākkum iṭam

(kali.63:3-4)

[kākkum adjp < kā ‘to protect, shield’]

‘the time when we protect’



**iṭai:** It is added to a nominal.

(i) locative (spatial): 'in; over; in between; along; through'

kal uyar **kaṭattiṭai** (pati.21:22)

[kaṭatt oblique of kaṭam 'forest']

'in the forest where the mountains are lofty'

kōṭṭiṭai (kali.101:17)

[kōṭṭ oblique of kōṭu 'horn']

'between the horns'

kaiyiṭai vaittatu meyyiṭai t timirum kavaḷam (narr.360:8-9)

[kai 'hand'; mey 'body']

'the morsel which was placed in the hand (i.e., trunk of the elephant) and springs/spreads all over the body'

kūṭaloṭu paraṅkunriṇiṭai (pari.17:23-24)

[paraṅkunrin oblique of paraṅkunru 'supreme hill, the Paraṅkunru']

'between the Kūṭal and the Paraṅkunru'

tām iṭai koṇṭatu atu āyiṇ (kali.24:13)

'if that's what he holds (as a cause) between (us)'

karaiyiṭai k kiḷinta niṇ kāḷakam (kali.73:17)

[karai 'border, edge']

'your strong garb which is torn along the border'

ūrīṭai ōṭi (pari.6:56)

[ūr 'town']

'flowing through the town'

## (ii) 'among'

em iṭaiyē (narr.395:3)  
 [em oblique of yām 'we']  
 'among us'

**il**<sup>9</sup>: It is added to a nominal. As a separate word, it means 'place, abode, house.'

## (i) locative (spatial): 'in; on; into; down; near; in the vicinity of; among'

arukil kaṇṭum ariyār (pura.207:3)  
 [aruku 'near; vicinity']  
 'those who do not recognize (you) although they see (you) near them'

tantai viyaṇ mārpil pāyntāṇ (kali.86:33)  
 [mārpū 'chest']  
 'He leaped **onto** his father's broad chest.'

tuṇaṅkai āṭiya maruṅkiṇ (pati.13:5-6)  
 [maruṅku 'location, site, side']  
 'at the location where (people) performed the tuṇaṅkai (dance)'

cilampil tuṇcum kavari (pati.11:21)  
 [cilampu 'hill']  
 'the antelope which slumbers **on the hill**'

---

<sup>9</sup> It is tempting to group this marker with **in** because occasionally it occurs as **in**. By a morphophonemic change it is sometimes realized as **ir**, as is the marker **in**. Therefore, it is difficult to distinguish between the two markers **il** and **in**. The basic meaning of **il** seems to be locative, while the basic meaning of **in** seems to be genitive.

**cāntil** ceyta ... itaṇattu (narr.351:6-7)  
 [cāntu 'sandalwood']  
 'in the loft that was built **on the sandalwood tree**'

**maruppil** kaṭāam vārntu (pati.16:6-7)  
 [maruppu 'tusks']  
 'the rut, having flowed **down the tusk(s)**'

nam cēriyil pōkā ... pārppān (kali.65:7-8)  
 [cēri 'neighborhood']  
 'the brahmin who does not go **through our neighborhood**'

tāṇē aritu cel **ulakil** cenṇaṇaṇ (pura.260:20-21)  
 [ulaku 'world']  
 'He went **into the precious world** (of the dead).'  
 'He reached the precious world (of the dead).'

koṭi koṭi **tammil** piṇaṅkiyavai pōl<sup>10</sup> (kali.92:52)  
 [tam oblique of tām 'those things']  
 'as if the vines were intertwined **among themselves**'

(ii) locative (temporal/action/manner): 'in; at'

**kuṛiyil** iṇiya kūṛi (narr.204:8)  
 [kuṛi 'rendezvous']  
 '(He) said sweet nothings **at the time of our rendezvous**, and ...'

**elliṇil** peyartal (aka.100:4)  
 [el 'dusk']  
 'leaving **at dusk**'

---

<sup>10</sup> In modern Tamil, it is **tamakku**].

**iravil** puṇarntōr (pari.6:54)  
 [iravu 'night']  
 'those who are united **at night**'

**ītalil** kuṛai kāṭṭātu (kali.27:1)  
 [ītal 'giving']  
 'without showing inadequacy **in giving**'

**kālattil** tōṇṛiya koṇmū (kali.82:2)  
 [kālatt oblique of kālam 'time']  
 'the dark cloud (nimbus) which appeared **at the right time**'

**iṭṭārkkū** yāl ārttum **pāṇiyil** (pari.20:57)  
 [pāṇi 'manner']  
 'in the manner of making the givers experience the (music of the) harp'  
 'in the manner of entertaining the suppliants with harp music'

(iii) instrumental: 'by; with the help of'

**kālil** ceṇṇum (narr.349:1)  
 [kāl 'foot']  
 'going **by foot**, and ...'

**collil** teḷippavum (narr.164:5)  
 [col 'words']  
 'although (I) reassure (you) **with (my) words**'

**ampiyil** tālppikkum ... vaiyai (pari.6:75-77)  
 [ampi 'raft']  
 '(the river) Vaiyai which delays (you) **because of the raft**'

**arattiṇil**

(kali.96:33)

[**aratt** oblique of **aram** ‘Righteousness’]  
‘by way of **Righteousness** (“dharma”)’

(iv) ablative: ‘from; as source’

**ninnil** tōṇriya ... tāmarai

(pari.4:60)

[**nin** oblique of **nī** ‘you’]  
‘the lotus (flower) which emerged **from you**’

ātirai **mutalvaṇil** kiḷanta nātar paṇṇoruvar

(pari.8:6-7)

[**mutalvaṇ** ‘the first person, principal’]  
‘the eleven chiefs who are talked about (as a group) starting **with the primary one**, Ātirai’

**pakkattil** pōkātu

(kali.65:12)

[**pakkatt** oblique of **pakkam** ‘nearby, vicinity’]<sup>11</sup>  
‘without going **near** ...’

(v) adverb of manner

**aritiṇil** tōṇriya yākkai

(kali.141:1)

[**aritu** ‘that which is difficult’]  
‘the (human) body which is born / emerged **in difficulty**’

---

<sup>11</sup> This could be interpreted as a directional form: ‘toward.’

**in**: It is added to a nominal. Many patterns in which it is used to provide a genitive or possessive sense can be discerned.

(i) genitive/possessive: 'of'

*Pattern (a): X-iṇ ... Y, where Y has X (virtue, place, area, action, artifact, part, etc.); Y subsumes X.*

kāṭalaka **varaippin** i-p-**polil** (pati.14:19)  
 [varaippu 'boundary'; polil 'grove']  
 'this grove (i.e., the world), with a boundary of oceans'  
 [ulavu 'ploughing, farming'; āl 'person']

ulavin pul āl (pati.15:12)  
 'the lowly person, with (the task of) ploughing'

ceruppin ... kōvē (pati.21:23)  
 [ceruppu 'foot-wear'; kō 'king']  
 'O king, wearing sandals (foot-wear).'

palavin payam (narr.201:5)  
 [palavu 'jack tree'; payam 'fruit, result']  
 'the result/fruit of the jack tree'

atin varavu (pari.11:36)  
 [atu 'it'; varavu 'arrival; increment; waxing']  
 'its (the moon's) enlargement/waxing'

*Pattern (b): X-iṇ Y, where Y is a part/relation of X; X subsumes Y.*

paruntin irum ciraku (pati.12:19)  
 [paruntu 'vulture'; ciraku 'wings']  
 'the large wings of the vulture'

**iraviṇ ellai** (pura.366:12)  
 [iravu 'night'; ellai 'limit']  
 'the limit of the night'

**titiyiṇ ciṛār** (pari.3:6)  
 [titi 'Titi, (a mythological character)'; ciṛār 'children']  
 'the children of Titi'

**tiruviṇ kaṇava** (pari.3:90)  
 [tiru 'Prosperity'; kaṇavan 'husband']  
 'O husband of Tiru (Prosperity).'

*Pattern (c) X-i ṇ Y, where X is a part of Y.*

**pūviṇ tāmarai** (pati.23:23)  
 [pū 'flower'; tāmarai 'lotus']  
 'the lotus, with flowers'

**ārā uṭampin nī** (pari.5:55)  
 [uṭampu body'; nī 'you']  
 'you, with a (young) body, not fully developed'

*Pattern (d) X-i ṇ Y, where Y is specified for X.*

**karumpin pātti** (pati.13:3)  
 [karumpu 'sugarcane'; pātti 'section']  
 'the sugarcane section'

**kaḷḷin cāṭi** (narr.295:7)  
 [kaḷ 'toddy'; cāṭi 'jar']  
 'jar of toddy'

*Pattern (e) X-i-ñ Y, where Y is made of X.*

**muttin̄ āram** (aka.13:1)

[**muttu** ‘pearls’; **āram** ‘garland, string’]  
‘a string of pearls’

(ii) accusative

**naravin̄ vāl̄tti** (pura.297:6)

[**naravu** ‘liquor’; **vāl̄ttu** ‘to praise’]  
‘praising the liquor’

(iii) instrumental: ‘with; by; as a result of; because of’

**kēlalāy maruppin̄ ul̄utōy** (pari.3:24)

[**maruppu** ‘tusks’; **ul̄u** ‘plough’]  
‘You, who ploughed with (your) tusks, in the form of a boar.’

**mālai muḷakkin̄ māñkaṇam paṇippa** (pati.50:1)

[**muḷakku** ‘roaring’; **paṇi** ‘to tremble’]  
‘as the herd of deer tremble because of the mountain’s roaring’

**punalin̄ karai kār ēṇran̄ru** (pari.12:98)

[**punal** ‘water, flood’; **kār** ‘winter’; **ēl** ‘to accept, receive’]  
‘the shore acquired the quality of winter because of the water/flood’

(iv) associative: ‘to the accompaniment of’

**muḷavin̄ varuvāy nī** (pari.20:75)

[**muḷavu** ‘drums’; **var** ‘to come’]  
‘You are arriving to the accompaniment of drums.’



(v) locative (spatial): 'in; on; upon; into; together; between'

**ceṛuvīṇ ... uruḷi ... maṇṭa** (pati.27:10-11)

[**ceṛu** 'field'; **maṇṭu** 'to rush']

'as the wheels (of the chariot) rush ... in the field'

**cāntiṇ toṭutta t̃intēṇ** (narr.1:4)

[**cāntu** 'sandalwood tree'; **toṭu** 'to string, hang']

'the sweet honey gathered on the (branches of the) sandalwood trees'

**kaṇṇiṇ uvantu** (pati. 20:8)

[**kaṇ** 'eyes'; **uva** 'to be delighted']

'delighted by (what) the eyes (see)'

'showing the joy in the eyes'

**āyattiṇ kūṭu** (pari.11:113)

[**āyatt** oblique of **āyam** 'group of companions'; **kūṭu** 'to join']

'Join (together with) the group of your companions.'

**veriniṇ ... ēriṇāḷ** (pari.12:48)

[**verin** 'back'; **ēru** 'to climb up']

'She climbed on the back (of the elephant).'

**keṭu vaḷai pūṇṭavaḷ mēṇiyiṛ kaṇṭu** (pari.20:34)

[**mēṇi** 'body'; **kaṇṭu** advp < **kāṇ** to see']

'She saw the lost bangle on the body of the woman wearing it, and ...'

(vi) locative (temporal/action)

**cēkkaiyuḷ pāyaliṇ aṛiyāy nī puṭai peyarvāy āyiṇum** (kali.10:10-11)

[**pāyal** 'sleep'; **puṭai peyar** 'to roll over']

‘even if you would roll over inadvertently **while sleeping** in the bed’

**maraiyin** **maṇantu** (kali.53:8)  
 [maraiyin oblique of marai ‘secrecy’; maṇa ‘to marry’]  
 ‘marrying in secrecy’

(vii) ablative: ‘from; as source’

**ninnin** **piriyalen** (kali.21:7)  
 [nin oblique of nī ‘you’; piri ‘to part with, separate’]  
 ‘I will not depart from you.’

**ninnin** **viṭāa** **niḷal**<sup>12</sup> (kali.61:8)  
 [ninnin oblique of nin, oblique of nī ‘you’; viṭu ‘to let go; leave’]  
 ‘the shadow which does not leave you’

**karpinin** **valāa** (aka.86:13)  
 [karpu ‘virtue’; valu ‘to swerve’]  
 ‘without swerving from virtue’

**malaiyin** **iḷi** **aruvi** (pari.16:32)  
 [malai ‘mountain’; iḷi ‘to descend’]  
 ‘the waterfall which flows from the mountain’

**meyyin** **pirittu** (pari.5:57)  
 [mey ‘body’; piri ‘to part with, separate’]  
 ‘removing (a part) from (his) body’

---

<sup>12</sup> In modern Tamil, it is **ninnai** viṭā(ta).

**mutaṇmaiṇ** ikanta kālam (pari.13:24-25)  
 [mutaṇmai 'primordial'; ika 'to exceed, move away, transcend']  
 'time which has transcended the primordial'

(x) comparative: 'like; as'

nilam nīr vaḷi vicumpu eṇṛa nāṇkin aḷappu ariyaiyē (pati.14:1-2)  
 [nāṇku 'four'; aḷappu 'measuring'; aru 'to be difficult']  
 'You are difficult to be measured like the four such as the earth,  
 the water, the wind, and the sky.'

matiyiṇ viḷaṅku mukattār (kali.62:14)  
 [mati 'moon'; viḷaṅku 'to shine']  
 'those (women) whose faces shine like the moon'

paṇṭaiyiṇ pārāṭṭi (kali.14:7)  
 [paṇṭai 'the past'; pārāṭṭu 'to praise']  
 'praising, as in the past'

(ix) comparative: 'more than'

itaṇiṇ koṭiyatu piṇitu oṇṇu illai (narr.322:2)  
 [itaṇ oblique of itu 'this one'; koṭu 'cruel']  
 'There is nothing more cruel than this (one).'

ninṇiṇ ciṛanta niṇ tāḷ iṇai (pari.4:62)  
 [niṇ oblique of nī 'you'; ciṛa 'to excel, surpass, be eminent']  
 'your feet which are more eminent than yourself'

(x) distributive

nāḷiṇ nāḷiṇ ... nilavu p parantāṅku<sup>13</sup> (pari.11:32-33)

<sup>13</sup> In modern Tamil, it is nāḷukku nāḷ.

[**nāḷ** 'day'; **para** 'to spread']  
 'as the moon's light **spread** (wider) **day by day**'

kārikai matu **oruvaiṇ** **oruvar** kaṇṇiṇ kavarpura<sup>14</sup> (pari.11:68)  
 [**oruvar** 'one person']  
 'as they experienced the delight of each other's beauty **with/through**  
**each other's** eyes'

(xi) directional: 'toward'

īra c **ceṟuviṇ** vittotu **ceṇra** vaṭṭi (narr.210:2-3)  
 [**ceṟu** 'field'; **cel** 'to go']  
 'the shallow bowl which **went** (i.e., was taken) **toward the damp**  
**field**'

**viḷaviṇ** celīiyar vēṇṭum (narr.390:6)  
 [**viḷavu** 'festival'; **cel** 'to go']  
 'You must go **to the festival**.'

(xii) adverb of manner

(when suffixed to a neuter adjectival noun ending with  
**tu**)

**cevvitiṇ** naṭantu (pati.22:8)  
 [**cevvitu** 'that which is perfect'; **naṭa** 'to behave']  
 'behaving **in the right manner**'

**vālitin** nūliṇ ilaiyā nuṇ mayir ilai (pati.39:9)  
 [**vālitu** 'that which is white'; **ilai** 'to fabricate']  
 'fine hair-like web that was **not fabricated in white** thread'

<sup>14</sup> In later Tamil, it is **orugarukku** **oruvar** 'between one another.'

**viruntin** vālkkai (pati.71:19)  
 [viruntu ‘strangeness’; vālkkai ‘life; living’]  
 ‘strange life’; ‘living in a strange manner’

**initinin** puṇarkkuven maṇṇō (aka.263:13)  
 [initu ‘that which is pleasant, sweet, nice’; puṇar ‘to join’]  
 ‘I would have made them join (with each other) nicely.’  
 (Notice that the **in** is repeated in **initinin** < **initu** + **in** + **in**. The first one following the stem can be taken as the oblique marker.)

**uṭan**<sup>15</sup>: It is added to a nominal. It also precedes a verb to function like an adverb giving the sense ‘altogether’ or ‘immediately.’

(i) ‘all over’

yāṇai kātuṭan niraṭara (narr.324:4)  
 [kāṭu ‘forest, jungle’; niraṭara ‘to fill up’]  
 ‘as the elephants filled/occupied all over the forest’

nāṭu uṭan viṭaṅkum ... nallicai (pati.24:10)  
 [nāṭu ‘country’; viṭaṅku ‘to shine’]  
 ‘good fame which shines all over the country’

(ii) associative: ‘together with; along with’

iḷaiyarum mutiyarum kiḷaiyuṭan kuḷii (narr. 207:7)  
 [kiḷai ‘clan’; kuḷu ‘to gather’]  
 ‘the young and the old, gathering together with their clan’

---

<sup>15</sup> It has a variant **uṭaṅku**: **uṭaṅku** amar ayam ‘group of companions who abide together’ (pari.19:105).

**araicanōṭu uṭaṇ māynta ... celvam pōl** (*kali.130:4*)

[**aracan** 'king'; **ōṭu** case marker 'with'; **uṭaṇ** 'together'; **māy** 'to perish']

'like the wealth which perished **together with the king**'

**āyattuṭaṇ nillāl** (*pari.11:111*)

[**āyatt** oblique of **āyam** 'group of companions'; **nil** 'to stay']

'she, without staying **with the group** of her companions'

(iii) inclusive: 'altogether; entire'

**col peyar nāṭṭam kēlvi neñcam eṇṇu aintu uṭaṇ pōrri** (*pati. 21:1-2*)

[**uṭaṇ** 'altogether'; **pōrru** 'to appreciate']

'**appreciating altogether** (the merit of) words, reputation, goal, listening, and heart'

**ūr uṭaṇ iravalarkku aruḷi t tēr uṭaṇ mullaikku itta ... pāri**

(*pura.201:2-3, 5*)

[**ūr** 'town'; **tēr** 'chariot'; **uṭaṇ** 'entire'; **aruḷ** 'to bestow';

**ī** 'to give']

'Pāri, who gave away **altogether the towns** to the suppliants and (his) **chariot** to the jasmine vine'

(iv) 'immediately; soon'

**namar koṭai nērntaṇar āyiṇ avar uṭaṇ nērvar kol** (*narr.393:10-11*)

[**uṭaṇ** 'immediately'; **nēr** 'to agree']

'If our relatives agree to give me away (in marriage), will he **agree** (to it) **immediately**?'

**uṭai(ya):** It is added to a nominal.

(genitive/possessive)

**muttu uṭai maruppu** (pati.32:3)  
 [muttu ‘pearls’; maruppu ‘tusks’]<sup>16</sup>  
 ‘tusks with pearls’

**ninnuṭai vālkkai** (pati.37:1)  
 [nin oblique of nī ‘you’; vālkkai ‘life’]  
 ‘your life’

**cīr uṭaiya ilai** (pura.11:13)  
 [cīr ‘beauty’; ilai ‘ornaments’]  
 ‘ornaments which have beauty’  
 ‘beautiful ornaments’

**umpar:** It is added to a nominal.

(locative [spatial]: ‘yonder’)

**vēñkaṭattu umpar** (aka.209:9)  
 [vēñkaṭatt oblique of vēñkaṭam ‘Vēñkaṭa hills’; umpar ‘beyond’]  
 ‘beyond the Vēñkaṭam’

**uḷi:** It is added to a nominal, non-past/non-completive stem, or past/completive stem.

(locative [temporal]: ‘when’)

**vēñkai koykuvam cenruḷi** (aka.48:6)

---

<sup>16</sup> The pearls here are not the pearls from oysters. They must be some hard growth in the tusk.

[**cenr** past/completive stem < **cel** 'to go']  
 'when we went to pick **vēṅkai** (flowers)'

**viyaḷ nakar celvuḷi c celvuḷi** (aka.49:14-15)  
 [**celv** non-past/non-completive stem < **cel** 'to go']  
 'whenever (she) moves around the large house'

(locative [spatial]: 'where')

**yāṇum urai kēṭpuḷi-y-ellām celvēṇ** (kali.146:29-30)  
 [**kēṭp** non-past/non-completive stem < **kēḷ** 'to hear']  
 'I will go to (all those places) wherever I hear about his presence.'

**uḷai**: It is added to a nominal; it means 'nearby.'

(i) locative (spatial): 'to'

**avanuḷai k kūuy k kūuy** (kali.63:6)  
 [**avan** 'he'; **kū** 'to call out']  
 'calling out (again and again) to him'

(ii) directional: 'to; toward'

**kēḷiruḷai c cenru** (kali.61:3)  
 [**kēḷir** 'companions'; **cel** 'to go']  
 'going to (his) companions'

**ennuḷai vantu** (kali.77:15)  
 [**en** oblique of **yāṇ** 'I'; **var** 'to come']  
 'coming near me'



**uḷ:** It means ‘in, inside.’ It is added to a nominal. When the nominal signifies plurality, the **uḷ** helps to single out an item from a group.

(i) locative (spatial): ‘inside; through’ (when followed by a verb of motion); ‘among’ (when added to a plural noun)

**kaliṅkattuḷ** (kali.69:3)  
[kaliṅkatt oblique of kaliṅkam ‘clothing’]  
‘inside (her) clothing’

**nāṛṛam uḷḷuḷ karantu** (pari.7:21)  
[uḷ ‘inside’; uḷḷuḷ ‘inside of inside’; kara ‘to hide’]  
‘hiding the fragrance deep inside’

**avaruḷ orutti** (pari.7:53)  
[avar oblique of avar ‘they’; orutti ‘one woman’]  
‘one woman among them’

**iraṇṭiṇuḷ onru** (pura.344:3)  
[iraṇṭiṇ oblique of iraṇṭu ‘two’; onru ‘one thing’]  
‘one of the two’

**nammuḷ nakutal** (kali.94:35)  
[nam oblique of nām ‘we’; naku ‘to laugh, rejoice’]  
‘rejoicing between us’

**irappōr kaiyuḷum pōki ... pulavar nāvil ceṇṇu vīḷntaṇṇu avaṇ aru**  
**niṇattu iyaṅkiya vēlē** (pura.235:11-15)  
[kai ‘hands’]  
‘The spear which bounced on his chest also went through the hands of the suppliants and fell on the poets’ tongues (who sing of him).’

(ii) locative (temporal/action): 'in; at the time of'

**kaṇavinuḷ uṟaiyum ... arivai** (pati.19:13-14)

[**kaṇavu** 'dream'; **uṟai** 'to stay still']  
'the woman who lives in (my) dreams'

**ōr irā vaikaluḷ** (kali.5:14)

[**vaikal** 'time, stay'; **irā** 'night']  
'during one night'

**celvattuḷ cērntu** (kali.25:19)

[**celvam** 'wealth, prosperity'; **cēr** 'to join, unite']  
'uniting with (someone) at the time of (his) prosperity'

**viḷavinuḷ viḷaiyāṭum poḷutu** (kali.35:14)

[**viḷavu** 'festival'; **viḷaiyāṭu** 'to play']  
'when playing at the festival'

(iii) associative: 'with'

**nīyē ennuḷ varutiyō ... ciṟu kuṭiyāṇē** (narr.82:2-3, 11)

[**en** oblique of **yān** 'I'; **var** 'to come']  
'Will you come with me to (our) small neighborhood?'

**uḷḷum**: It is basically **uḷ** 'inside' + **um** 'and, even, also.' It is added to a nominal, and serves to single out an item from a group when added to a plural noun.

('amongst; among all ...')

**vicumpu vaḷaṅku maḷaḷiruḷḷum ciṟanta cemmiṇ** (pati.31: 27-28)

[**maḷaḷir** 'women'; **ciṟa** 'to be eminent, illustrious']  
'Cemmiṇ (the star Aruntati) who is illustrious among all celestial women'

**ellāruḷḷum** niṇ naḷ icai **mikumē** (pati.38:2)  
 [ellār ‘all people’; miku ‘to surpass, exceed’]  
 ‘Your fine reputation surpasses **among all** the (wealthy) people.’

yām kūriya **aintanuḷḷum** (pari.13:17)  
 [aintan oblique of aintu ‘five’]  
 ‘**among the five** (elements) I stated earlier’

**uḷi**: It is added to a nominal.

(adverb of manner)

perum peyar **muraiyuḷi** p peṛra putalvaṇ (kali.75:24-25)  
 [murai ‘custom, relationship, turn’; peru ‘to get, obtain’]  
 ‘the son who got the great name (of his grandfather) **by relation**’

**marapuḷi** p pāṭi (kali.103:75)  
 [marapu ‘convention’; pātu ‘to sing’]  
 ‘(we) singing **according to the convention**’

**u(l)lē**: It is **uḷ** ‘inside’ + **ē** case marker/particle, and is added to a nominal.

(locative [spatial]: ‘inside’)

veṇ muttam ... **nīruḷē pīrappinūm** nīrkku avi tām eṇ ceyyum (kali.9:15-16)  
 [nīr ‘water’; pīra ‘to be born’]  
 ‘**Although they are born** in the water, what can the white pearls do for **the water**?’

**uḷlē** kaṇalum uḷḷam (aka.305:14)  
 [kaṇal ‘to burn’; uḷḷam ‘heart, mind’]  
 ‘my heart which is fuming **inside**’

**ūṅkaṇ:** It is added to a nominal or an adjectival participle. It means ‘yonder.’

(locative [spatial]: ‘yonder’)

uyar **varaikku ūṅkaṇ** aḥtu em ūr (aka.38:16-17)  
[**varai** ‘mountain’; **ūṅkaṇ** < **ūṅkaṇ** ‘yonder’]<sup>17</sup>

‘Our town is **beyond / on the other side of** the tall **mountain.**’

(An example of a postposition [**ūṅkaṇ**] following a noun in its dative form.)

(locative [temporal]: ‘then’)

iṭū **ūṅkaṇ** iṇiya paṭūum (narr.246:1)  
[iṭu ‘to be narrow’; **ūṅkaṇ** ‘then’; iṭū **ūṅkaṇ** ‘now and then; often’]

‘pleasant things befall **often / now and then**’

**ūṅku:** It is added to a nominal or a negative adjectival participle.

(locative [temporal]: ‘at; before; till; until’)

tāṇai **paravā ūṅkē** (pati. 29:15)

[**paravā** negative adjp of **paravu** ‘to spread’;

**ūṅkē** < **ūṅku** + **ē** particle]

‘**before** the army **spread**’

aṇṇai ṇāṇṇiṇoṭu **inṇin ūṅkum** (puṛa.376:17)

[**inṇin** oblique of **inru** ‘today’]

---

<sup>17</sup> It is possible to analyze uyar varaikku ūṅkaṇ as uyar varai-k-ūṅkaṇ ‘at a calling distance from the tall hills.’ Compare **ūṅkaṇ** and **āṅkaṇ**.

**‘from that day to this day’**

(Note that it is a “from X to Y” type of construction.)

**ūṭu**: It is added to a nominal.

(locative [spatial]: ‘through’)

pal kāl ... nuṇ **tukil ūṭu** vantu **imaikkum** ... alkuḷ (*narr.366:1-3*)

[**tukil** ‘fine/nice cloth’; **imai** ‘to glitter, twinkle’]

‘her pelvic region where the many strands (of her waist ornament)  
**glitter through her fine cloth**’

**ūl**: It is added to a nominal.

(repetitive: ‘times’)

pal **ūl** ... eṇṇai **nōkkum**

(*kali.61:5*)

[**pal** ‘many’; **nōkku** ‘to look at’]

‘He would **look at me many times**.’

**etir(ē)**: It is added to a nominal; it means ‘in front of.’

(locative [spatial]: ‘in front of’)

**iraiṇcuka** peruma niṇ **cenni** ... muṇivar ēntu **kai etirē** (*pura.6:19-20*)

[**kai** ‘hand(s)’; **iraiṇcu** ‘to bow, stoop, hang’]

‘Lord, may your head bow **in front of the raised hands** of the ascetics.’

(locative [temporal]: ‘in response to; in sequence’)

ī eṇa irattal iḷintaṇṇu **atan etir** īyēṇ **enral** ataniṇum iḷintaṇṇu

(*pura.204:1-2*)

[**atan** oblique of **atu** 'that one'; **en** 'to say']

'It is lowly to beg. **Thereupon**, it is lowlier to respond "I will not give." '

**ellai**: It means 'limit.' It is added to a nominal or an adjectival participle.

(temporal limitation: 'at the time; during; in the end; until')

**nerunal ellai nī eṛintōṇ**

(*puṛa.300:3*)

[**nerunal** 'yesterday'; **eṛi** 'to toss, destroy']

'the man whom you tossed/destroyed yesterday'

**ñāyirru ellai ālviṇaikkutavi iraviṇ ellai varuvatu nāṭi**

(*puṛa.366:11-12*)

[**ñāyirru** oblique of **ñāyiru** 'sun'; **iraviṇ** oblique of **iravu** 'night'; **utavu** 'to help'; **nāṭu** 'to seek, look for']

'providing help at the time of day(light) for the task of ruling (the country), and looking for what is forthcoming at the time of night'

'engaging oneself in ruling the country at daybreak and watching for what is forthcoming by nightfall'

**nannāḷ talaivarum ellai ... tam nāṇ tām tāṅkuvār** (*kali.39:31-32*)

[**talaivaru** 'to come forth'; **tāṅku** 'to contain, hold']

'those who would control their coyness until the good day (of our wedding) arrives'

ē: It is added to a nominal. See also “The Particles.”

(i) accusative<sup>18</sup>

poṇ puṇai uṭukkaiyōṇ puṇarntu amar **nilaiyē** niṇaimiṇ (*pari.15:28-29*)  
[**nilai** ‘state of being’; **niṇai** ‘to think’;

**poṇ puṇai uṭukkaiyōṇ** ‘the one with a golden garb; Tirumāl; Vishnu’]

‘Think of His (the one with a golden garb) **state of being** together (with His brother).’

peyalē pōl

(*kali.55:1*)

[**peyal** ‘clouds’; **pōl** ‘like’]

‘**like the** (rain) **clouds**’

tiri umiḷ neyyē pōl teṇ paṇi uṇaikkum kāl

(*kali.15:21*)

[**ney** ‘oil’; **pōl** ‘like’]

‘when (her) eyes get cloudy with cool tears like **the oil** which the wick drops’

aṇiyalaṇē ... māṇṇōr tēttu māṇiya **viṇaiyē**

(*pati.20:6-7*)

[**māṇu** ‘to change’; **viṇai** ‘action’]

‘He does not know **retreat** from the enemies’ lands.’

‘He does not know how **to retreat** from the enemies’ lands.’

uṇmiṇ **kaḷḷē** aṭumiṇ **cōrē**

(*pati.18:1*)

[**kaḷ** ‘toddy’; **cōru** ‘rice’]

‘Drink **the toddy**. Cook **the rice**.’

(ii) locative (spatial): ‘in; at; through’

**alāṭimō** notumalar **talaiyē**

(*narr.13:2*)

<sup>18</sup> Some might not consider the ē in this group of examples as a case marker, but would rather treat it as an emphatic particle. Note that in modern Tamil, the accusative marker **ai** occurs in such contexts: e.g., **nilaiyai** niṇaiyūṅkaḷ; **peyalai** p pōl; **neyyai** p pōl.

[**talai** 'place'; **aḷu** 'to cry, weep']  
 'Do not cry **in this place** that belongs to strangers.'

i-v-vaṇanilai āṛē (pura.263:4)  
 [āṛu 'river']  
 'through this drying up river'

**pakalē** emmoṭu āṭi **iravē** ... nal il nōyoṭu vaikuti āyiṇ (aka.370:4-6)  
 [**pakal** 'day'; **āṭu** 'to play'; **iravu** 'night'; **vaiku** 'to stay']  
 'if you would play with me **during the day** and **stay at night** in  
 your good house with (love)sickness, ...'

iṛaiṇcuka peruma niṇ ceṇṇi ciṛanta nāṇ maṛai muṇivar ēntu kai  
**etirē** (pura.6:19-20)  
 [etir 'in front']  
 'May your head bow **in front of** the raised hands of the noble and  
 the learned who are well versed in the four Secrets/Vedas.'

(iii) vocative

kaṭuñ-ciṇa **vēntē** (pati.30:44)  
 'King with intense anger.'

pāṭiṇi **vēntē**<sup>19</sup> (pati.17:14)  
 'King of female singers.'

---

<sup>19</sup> It is also the end of the poem.



(iv) adverb of manner

paṇṇi ... mella mella p **piṛakkē** **peyarntu** (narr.98:2, 6)  
 [piṛakku 'back'; peyar 'to move']  
 'the pig, moving **backward** very slowly, ...',<sup>20</sup>

**ai**<sup>21</sup>: It is added to a nominal.

(i) accusative: (direct object + **ai**)

turaivaṇai nīyē collal vēṇṭumāl (aka.170:7, 8)  
 [turaivan 'man from the shore-land'; col 'to tell, inform, reveal']  
 'You have to **inform the man from the shore-land.**'

koṭicciyai ... koṇṭanai ceṇmō (aka.132:7-8)  
 [koṭicci 'mountain girl/woman'; koḷ 'to take']  
 'Take the **Koṭicci** (mountain girl) and go.'

veḷḷivītiyai p pōla (aka.147:9)  
 'like **Veḷḷivīti**'

orūpa ninnai (pati.34:1)  
 [nin oblique of nī 'you'; oru 'to shun']  
 'They **shun you.**'

vēḷai nī munniya ticai (malai:94)  
 [vēḷ 'chieftain'; munnu 'to place in front, to intend']  
 'the direction in which you go **thinking about the Vēḷ** (chieftain)'

<sup>20</sup> This could be interpreted as a locative.

<sup>21</sup> A variety of examples is given in order to provide a broad sense of the use of this marker.

**cenrōrai c colli k kāṭṭi**<sup>22</sup> (malai:78-79)  
 [cenrōr ‘those who went’; col ‘to tell, reveal, inform’]  
 ‘informing those who went (to his land) and making them see (things)’

**nāṭanai varūm enrōl** (narr.65:9)  
 ‘She said that the Nāṭan will come.’

**ninnai innan enru uraittal** (pari.1:31-32)  
 ‘saying that you are of this nature’  
 ‘to say that you are like this’

**ūranai p pulattal kūṭumō** (aka.26:4, 5)  
 [pula ‘to sulk’]  
 ‘Is it possible to sulk with the Ūran?’

**cērppanai yānum kātalen yāyum naṇi veyyal** (kuru.51:3-4)  
 [cērppan ‘the man from the shore-land’;  
 kātalen ‘one who has love’]  
 ‘I love the Cērppan. My mother also likes him very much.’

**kaḷi t turappōrai ... vaṭṭu viṭṭu eṇivōr**<sup>23</sup> (pari.11:54-55)  
 [kaḷi ‘bamboo stick’; eṇi ‘to toss, destroy’]  
 ‘those who chase/destroy the people, who are rushing (across the water) with the help of bamboo sticks, by flinging water bags (at them)’

<sup>22</sup> In modern Tamil, it would be **cenrōrukku c colli** ...

<sup>23</sup> In modern Tamil, it would be **turappōr mēl vaṭṭu viṭṭu eṇivōr** ‘those who fling water bags on those who are rushing.’ An excellent example illustrating a change in the interpretation of the verb **eṇi**.

**uppai māri** veṇṇel tarīya<sup>24</sup> (kurū.269:5)

[**uppu** ‘salt’; **māru** ‘change, exchange’]

‘in order to bring white paddy **by exchanging salt** (with the paddy)’

**kaciṇai anna ... kaṇi** (kurū.274:2)

[**kācu** ‘coin’; **kaṇi** ‘fruit(s)’]

‘**fruits which are like coins**’

(Note that the case marker **ai** is added to the oblique stem **kācin**.)

**innatai ... ikuḷaikku uṇarttu** (narr.71:1-2)

[**innatu** ‘this one; one of this nature’; **uṇarttu** ‘to make understand’]

‘**Make your friend understand this one.**’

**vēlattai iṇru kaṇṭāy pōl** (kali.97:20-21)

[**vēlam** ‘elephant’; **kaṇṭāy** < **kāṇ** ‘to see’]

‘as if you encountered the elephant today’

**ampalai nāṇi** (kali.3:1)

[**ampal** ‘rumour’; **nāṇ(u)** ‘to be embarrassed; be coy’]

‘**embarrassed about the (town’s) rumour**’

**kalilai ... antaṇar kalaṅkiṇar maruṇṭu** (pari.6:44-45)

[**kalil** ‘muddied water’; **kalaṅku** ‘to be agitated, confused, puzzled’]

‘the brahmins were puzzled by the muddied water’

**taṅkarum kāmattai t taṇantu** (kali.121:7)

[**kāmam** ‘passion’; **taṇa** ‘to give up’]

‘**giving up the unbearable passion**’

---

<sup>24</sup> This one and a few other examples that follow show that the accusative marker **ai** is suffixed to neuter nouns also.

(ii) (internal object + ai)

**ninnai** p purai **niṇaippin**<sup>25</sup> (pari.3:46)

[**niṇ** oblique of **nī** 'you'; **niṇai** 'to think, consider']

'if one were to **think** of a comparison **to you**'

**ninnai** ampuli **kāṭṭal** initu<sup>26</sup> (kali.80:18-19)

[**niṇ** oblique of **nī** 'you'; **kāṭṭu** 'to show']

'It is nice to **show** the moon **to you**.'

**avanai** ... munnir vaḷāakam ellām ... **ṇāyirrai** **nāṭu enrēn** (kali.146:27-29)

[**avan** 'he'; **ṇāyir** oblique of **ṇāyiru** 'sun';

**nāṭu** 'to seek, search, look for']

'I told the sun to look for him all over the fertile land enclosed by the ocean.'

(Note the double accusative: **avanai** and **ṇāyirrai**.)

**oṭu**, **ōṭu**<sup>27</sup>: It is added to a nominal.

(i) genitive

**kūntal ennum** **peyarōṭu** **kūntal** eri ciṇam koṇṇōy (pari.3:31-32)

[**peyar** 'name']

'O you who destroyed/demolished the anger of (the demon) **Kūntal** (Keśi) **with the name kūntal**.'

<sup>25</sup> In modern Tamil, it would be **niṇakku** oppumai (i.e., purai) niṇaittāl.

<sup>26</sup> In modern Tamil, it would be **niṇakku** ... **kāṭṭal**.

<sup>27</sup> In most cases, **ōṭu** precedes a vowel, while **oṭu** precedes either a vowel or a consonant.

(ii) accusative

**cērppaṇoṭu maṇavā ūṅkē** (narr.31:12)

[**cērppan** ‘the man from the shore-land’; **maṇa** ‘to marry’]  
‘before **marrying the Cērppan**’

**kātal nammoṭu niṅkā māru** (narr.231:9)

[**nam** oblique of **nām** ‘we’; **niṅku** ‘to leave’]  
‘because (the) love (he gave us) **did not leave us, ...**’

**poykaiyōṭu okkum niṅ kuṇṇiṅ ... cuṇai**<sup>28</sup> (pari.8:15-16)

[**poykai** ‘pond’; **o** ‘to resemble’]  
‘The spring in your hill **resembles the pond** (on the Himalayas).’

(iii) associative: There is more than one subject or one object,  
but there is only one verb. The meaning is ‘along with;  
together with; altogether’, or ‘and.’

**nōyoṭu paci ikantu** (pati.13:27)

[**nōy** ‘sickness’; **paci** ‘hunger’]  
‘having gone beyond / removed from **hunger and sickness**’

**kaṭaloṭu pulampuvōl** (kali.144:68)

[**kaṭal** ‘ocean’]  
‘she who cries **along with the ocean**’

**maṭantaiyoṭu vatuvai ayamtaṇai** (aka.36:11-12)

[**maṭantai** ‘naive woman’]  
‘You celebrated your wedding **with the naive woman.**’

---

<sup>28</sup> In modern Tamil, it would be **poykaiyai okkum**.

māa meyyoṭu muraṇiya uṭukkaiyai (pari.4:8)

[mey 'body']

'You have/wear a (golden) garment which conflicts **with** (your) **tawny body.**'

vēroṭu maram vempa (kali.9:4)

[vēr 'root'; maram 'trees']

'as the trees lost their sap **altogether from the roots**'

avaṇoṭu māru uṇṭō ... namakku (kali.62:18-19)

[avan '(that) he']

'Is there (any) difference (of opinion) **between him** and us?'

kaluḷum kaṇṇoṭu ... alintu evaṇ niṇaipu vāṭuti (narr.208:3)

[kaṇ 'eyes'; ali 'to perish']

'Thinking what, do you **perish along with** your tearful eyes and wilt?'

ivaḷōṭu ... vāliya (pati.21:37-38)

[ivaḷ '(this) she']

'May you prosper **together with her.**'

pōtu aviḷ marattōṭu ... karai kaviṇ pera (kali.26:7)

[maratt oblique of maram 'trees'; kaviṇ peru 'to attain abundant/fascinating beauty']

'as the river bank attained fascinating beauty **together with the blooming trees**'

vittoṭu cenra vaṭṭi paṇpala miṇoṭu peyarum (narr.210:3-4)

[vittu 'seeds'; cel 'to go'; miṇ 'fish'; peyar 'to return']

'where the basket which **left with seeds returns with** many kinds of fish'

‘the town, where the basket of seeds which was taken by the seller comes back filled with fish’

(iv) instrumental: ‘by; with the help of; through; because of’

**nāvoṭu navilā** nakai paṭu tiñcol (aka.16:4)  
 [nā ‘tongue’; navil ‘to practice’]  
 ‘sweet funny words (of the child) which are **not practiced** (well) **by the tongue**’

**maḷaikkaṇṇār** kai vaḷam ... **vaṭuvoṭu kāṇāy** nī (pari.18:16-17)  
 [vaṭu ‘scar’; kāṇ ‘to see, find out’]  
 ‘See the generous embracing of lovely-eyed women **through the scars** (on his body).’

**kaṭum cūl vayavoṭu** kāṇal **eytātu** kaḷaṇi oḷinta ... **pēṭai** (narr.263:5-6)  
 [vayavu ‘ailment due to pregnancy’; eytu ‘to reach’]  
 ‘the female (crane) which resorted to the field **without going into** the banks of the backwaters **because of the ailment** of advanced pregnancy’

**kāloṭu paṭṭa** māri (narr.2:9)  
 [kāl ‘wind’; paṭu ‘to fall down’]  
 ‘the rain which **came down/scattered because of the wind**’

**nōyoṭu pullenra** nutal (kali.3:4)  
 [nōy ‘sickness, ailment’; pul en ‘to lose luster/life’]  
 ‘(her) forehead which has **lost its shine because of** (love)sickness’

**piṇi koḷḷum kaṇṇoṭu** ... nī pū p **pali viṭṭa** kaṭavul (kali.93:23-24)  
 [kaṇ ‘eyes’; pali viṭu ‘to make an offering’]  
 ‘the goddess for whom you made an offering of flowers **due to** (her) ensnaring eyes’

pōtu aviḷ marattōṭu ... karai kavin̄ peṛa (kali.26:7)  
 [maratt oblique of maram 'trees';  
 kavin̄ peru 'to attain fascinating beauty']  
 'as the river bank attained fascinating beauty because of the blooming trees'

(v) dative: indirect object

ittalai ninnoṭu viṇaval (aka.7:16-17)  
 [nin̄ oblique of nī 'you'; viṇa 'to enquire']  
 'I shall ask you now.'

emmoṭu collalum paḷiyō<sup>29</sup> (kuri:144-145)  
 [em oblique of yām 'we'; col 'to tell, inform, reveal']  
 'Is it wrong even to tell me?'

peruntakaiyōṭu evaṇ pala moḷikuvam (kali.5:8)  
 [peruntakai 'great one'; moḷi 'to say']  
 'How can we say many things to the Great One?'  
 [nin̄ oblique of nī 'you']

ninnoṭu teḷittanar (narr.358:4)  
 'He made it clear with you.'

(vi) locative (spatial): 'at; in'

koṭṭaiyoṭu pukaḷ varampu ikantōy (pari.5:70)  
 [koṭṭai 'lotus bud; inside of a lotus'; ika 'to go beyond, go away']

---

<sup>29</sup> Cf. tuṇintanirkku oru poruḷ colluvatu utaiyēṇ (kali.8:7-8) 'I have something to say/reveal to you who have decided to ...', where kku is the case marker, not oṭu.



‘O you who **excelled** the limit of fame (even at your birth) **in the lotus bud.**’

(vii) enumerative: ‘thus; namely’

**nilam nīr tī vaḷi vicumpōṭu aintum aḷantu** (*pati.24:15-16*)

[**nilam** ‘earth’; **nīr** ‘water’; **tī** ‘fire’; **vaḷi** ‘wind’;

**vicumpu** ‘sky’; **aintu** ‘five’]

‘measuring all the five namely, the earth, the water, the fire, the wind, and the sky’

**kurukoṭu peyar perṛa māl varai**

(*pari.5:9*)

[**kuruku** a name; **peyar** ‘name’; **peru** ‘to obtain’]

‘the big mountain which obtained its name (thus:) “**Kuruku**” ’

**k(k)(u), akk(u), ukk(u):**

(i) subject + **kk**

**ninakkō aṛiyunaḷ neñcē**<sup>30</sup>

(*narr.44:5*)

[**nin** oblique of **nī** ‘you’; **aṛi** ‘to know’]

‘O my heart, is she someone **known to you?**’

(ii) genitive

**ninakku ... vaṇappu**

(*pari.3:48, 50*)

[**nin** oblique of **nī** ‘you’; **vaṇappu** ‘beauty’]

‘**your beauty**’

**mutumaikku ūḷi yāvarum uṇarā āti mutalva**

(*pari.2:17-19*)

[**mutumai** ‘antiquity, old age’; **ūḷi** ‘epoch, eon’]

<sup>30</sup> In modern Tamil, it is **unakku t teriyumā?** or **un neñcukku t teriyumā?**

‘O Primordial One, the (innumerable) **eons of** whose **age/antiquity** no one knows.’

(iii) accusative (direct object)

**nāṭar̥ku k kātal ceytal**<sup>31</sup> (narr.268:5-6)  
 [nāṭan̄ ‘the man from the country-side’; kātal cey ‘to love’]  
 ‘loving the **Nāṭan̄**’

**kuṭar kūḷikku ārttuvān** (kali.101:26)  
 [kūḷi ‘demon’; ārttu ‘to feed’]  
 ‘he who feeds the **Kūḷi**-demon with the liver of the bull’

(iv) ‘because of; as a result of’

**cērppar̥ku yān niṇaintu iraṅkēn** (narr.275:6-7)  
 [cērppan̄ ‘man from the shore-land’; iraṅku ‘to feel sorry’]  
 ‘I will not think of the **Cērppan̄** and be pitiful because of him.’

**peyarvukku iraṅki** (aka.147:13)  
 [peyarvu ‘departure’; iraṅku ‘to feel sorry’]  
 ‘feeling pitiful because of (his) departure’

(v) dative: ‘for; to’ (indirect object)

**uraittiṇ emakkē** (aka.200:14)  
 [em oblique of yām ‘we’; urai ‘to tell’]  
 ‘Tell me.’

**tuṇintaṇirkku oru poruḷ colluvatu uṭaiyēn** (kali.8:7-8)  
 [tuṇi ‘to dare, determine’; col ‘to tell, reveal’]  
 ‘I have something to tell you, who are determined (to leave).’

<sup>31</sup> In modern Tamil, it would be **nāṭaṇai k kātalikkum**.

(Here, the dative **kku** governs the verb **uṭaiyēṇ** 'I have', not **colluvatu** 'saying'; compare **emmoṭu collal** in *kuri:144-145*)

**ninakku** oṇṇu kūṇuvām kēḷi iṇi (kali.55:5)  
 [**nin** oblique of **nī** 'you'; **kūṇu** 'to state, say']  
 'Listen now. We (hon.) shall **say** something **to you**.'

**ñālattu** maṇṇuyirkku eñcātu iṭṭu (pati.15:35-36)  
 [**uyir** 'life-breath'; **i** 'to give, provide']  
 '**giving** relentlessly **to the** lives on earth'

**nakaivarkku** araṇam āki (pati.31:34)  
 [**nakaivar** 'allies, friends'; **āku** 'to become']  
 '**becoming** a shelter **for the** allies'

**paḷi** namakku eḷuka eṇṇāy (matu:204)  
 [**nam** 'oblique of **nām** 'we'; **eḷu** 'to rise']  
 'You will not say "**May** the blame **be** upon us."'

**kuṛitta** inṇam **ninakku** evaṇ ariya (aka.2:10)  
 [**nin** oblique of **nī** 'you'; **aru** 'to be rare']  
 'How can the intended pleasure be **rare** **for you** (to attain)?'

**koṭitu** eṇa niṇṇai yāṇ kaḷarutal vēṇṭumō ... **ninakkē** (kali.100:21-23)  
 [**nin** 'oblique of **nī** 'you'; **koṭitu** 'that which is bad']  
 'Do I have to chide you that this is **bad** **for you**?'

**karumpu** karu muka k **kaṇakku** aḷippōr (pari.19:39)  
 [**karumpu** 'sugar cane'; **kaṇam** 'group'; **aḷippōr** 'those who give']  
 '**people who** give sugar canes **to the** group of black-faced monkeys'  
 (Note that the case marker **kku** is added directly to the non-oblique form **kaṇam**.)

(vi) 'for the sake of; in order to; in anticipation of'

**piṛarkku eṇa vāḷti nī** (pati.38:16)

[piṛar 'others'; vāḷ 'to live']

'You live only **for the sake of others.**'

**amararkkā c cenṇa niṇ ...**<sup>32</sup> (pari.2:71)

[amarar 'gods, immortals'; cel 'to go']

'you(r) ... who went **for the sake of the gods**'

niṇ ... kaṇ civappu aṇcuvārku t tuṇi nīṅki āṭal toṭaṅku (pari.6:96-97)

[aṇcu to be afraid of'; toṭaṅku 'to start']

'Get over your anger and **start dancing for the sake of him who is afraid of the fury of your eyes.**'

**poruṭku iṛatti** (kali.10:12)

[poruḷ 'wealth, riches'; iṛa 'to depart, go away']

'You are **going away for the sake of wealth.**'

(vii) 'in exchange for'

**vāḷaikku ... pāṇmakaḷ ... nelliṇ mukavai koḷḷāḷ ...**

muttamoṭu naṅkalam perūum payaṅkeḷu vaippu (aka.126:8-13)

[vāḷai 'vāḷai fish'; koḷ 'to receive'; peru 'to get, obtain']

'the fruitful bounteous environment, where the fisherwoman does not take measures of paddy **in exchange for the vāḷai fish**, but gets good jewelry with pearls'

<sup>32</sup> In modern Tamil, it would be amararkkāka.

(viii) 'in response to; because of'

vāṭu pal akal ilai **kōṭaikku** oyyum ... (aka.143:4)

[**kōṭai** 'west wind'; **oy** 'to fall, scatter']

'the many big withering leaves fall and scatter **because of the kōṭai** wind ...'

vaṇ **peyaṛku** **aviḷnta** painkoṭi mullai (aka.124:11)

[**peyal** 'downpour'; **aviḷ** 'to unfold']

'the fresh jasmine vine which **blossomed in response to the heavy rain**'

**amarkku** **etirnta** ... maṛavar (pati.22:20)

[**amar** 'war'; **etir** 'to face']

'warriors **who faced / responded to the war**'

**kaṇ** ... **onnātārku** **avaṇ** **vēliṇ** **cēntu** (kali.57:9-11)

[**kaṇ** 'eyes'; **onnātār** 'enemies'; **cēntu** < **ce** 'to turn red']

'Your **eyes turned red** like his spear which turns red in response to his **enemies**.'

**ciritirku** p peritu **uvantu** (puṛa.398:17)

[**ciritu** 'small thing'; **uva** 'to be delighted']

'(He) was much **delighted for a small thing**, and ...'

(ix) locative (spatial): 'at; in', 'in between (when added to more than one noun in a series and followed by **um**)'

ataṇāl **taṅkiṇ** **evaṇō** ... **em** ... **ūrkkē** (narr.67:9-12)

[**taṅku** 'to stay over'; **ūr** 'town, place']

‘Therefore, what **if** you **stay over in** our town?’

‘So, **if** you **stay**, what is it **to** our city?’

**māṭakku eḷutu aṇi kaṭavuḷ** (aka.167:14-15)

[**māṭam** ‘inlet of the wall’; **māṭakku** < **māṭam** + **kku**;

**eḷutu** ‘to write, paint, draw’]

‘god, **painted** and **beautifying** the **inlet of the wall**’

(Note that the case marker **kku** is added directly to the non-oblique form **māṭam**. Traditional derivation would be **māṭakku** < **māṭam** + **akku** augment + **kku**.)

**kiḷaṅku maṇaṇku iṇra muḷai** (aka.212:4-5)

[**maṇal** ‘sand’; **iṇ** ‘to give birth, release’]

‘the sprout which was **released** by the tuber **in the sand**’

**paraṅkunṛiṅkum ... vaiyaikkum ... kūṭaṅkum kaiyūḷ taṭumāṛram**

**naṇru** (pari.17:43-46)

[**paraṅkunṛu** ‘the Paraṅkunṛu hill’; **vaiyai** ‘the river Vaiyai’;

**kūṭal** ‘Madurai’; **taṭumāṛram** ‘staggering, distribution’]

‘The **staggering** of rituals **between Paraṅkunṛu, Vaiyai, and Kūṭal** is nice.’

‘The rotation of rituals **between Paraṅkunṛu, Vaiyai, and Kūṭal** is nice.’

(x) locative (temporal): ‘at; in’

**vāṭaikkku p pirivōr maṭavar** (narr.366:11-12)

[**vāṭai** ‘winter’; **piri** ‘to depart, separte’]

‘Those who depart **in the winter** are gullible.’

**kōṭaikkku ... malai vempa** (kali.20:3-5)

[**kōṭai** ‘summer’; **vempu** ‘to lose freshness, wither’]

‘as the mountain loses its richness **in the summer**’

(xi) ‘befitting; appropriate for; in accordance with’

maṭantai ... kuḷaikku amartta nōkkam (aka.3:16, 17)

[kuḷai ‘earrings’; amar ‘be equal to’]

‘the young woman’s glances which are just **right for her earrings**’

vāymaikku ērpa (narr.393:9)

[vāymai ‘truth, reality’; ēl ‘to accept, be in accordance’]

‘**in accordance with truth/reality**’

aṇikku aṇi (kali.85:17)

[aṇi ‘beauty’]

‘**beauty appropriate for beauty**’

enakku urittu ennāl ninra en ... aṇñai (aka.145:21-22)

[ena oblique of yān ‘I’; uri ‘to deserve, be appropriate’]

‘my girl who stood up (in front of me) without saying “It is **for me**”’

emakku il (pati.39:2)

[em oblique of yām ‘we’; il ‘to be non-existent’]

‘There is **nothing for us.**’

‘We do not have anything.’

nallatarku uriyai (narr.16:3-4)

[nallatu ‘a good thing’; uri ‘to deserve, be appropriate’]

‘You are fit **for** (i.e., you deserve) **good things.**’

pal pukal kēṭṭarku initu (pati.12:8-9)

[kēṭṭa verbal noun < kēl ‘to hear’; initu ‘a sweet/pleasant thing’]

‘(your) many reputation is pleasant **for listening / to hear about**’

**nakutaṛku oṇru** (kali.23:5)  
 [nakutal verbal noun < **naku** 'to laugh'; **oṇru** 'one thing, something']  
 'something fit for laughing about'

(xii) 'responsible for'

**aṇaṅkutaṛku yāṇ taṇ aṛival** (kuru.337:4-5)  
 [aṇaṅkutaṛ verbal noun < **aṇaṅku** 'to afflict'; **aṛi** 'to know']  
 'I know her (as being responsible) for afflicting me.'

(xiii) adverb of manner

**arumai naṛku aṛiyinūm** (pari.1:33)  
 [naṛku 'well < **nal** 'good'; **aṛi** 'to know']  
 'although we know well the difficulty of describing you'

(xiv) directional: 'toward' with a verb of motion

**ūrkkū p pōvōy** (narr.200:7)  
 [ūr 'town, home town'; **pō** 'to go']  
 'You will go to your (home) town and ...'

**ciṛu kaḷi ēṛ uṇkaṇ nīrkku viṭṭu ūmtāyūm nī**<sup>33</sup> (kali.97:26-27)  
 [nīr 'water'; **viṭṭu** 'to let go, release']  
 'You are the one who rode the elephant with small eyes and let it go toward the water (front).'

---

<sup>33</sup> Another possible interpretation: 'You are the one who by leaving (her) let her beautiful ensnaring eyes weep; and the one who united with her (later).'



(xv) relational: 'to; concerning; in relation to;  
with respect to'

**vāliyōrku avan ilaiyan** (pari.2:20-21)  
[vāli 'the White One; Balarāma'; iḷa 'young']  
'He is younger to Vāliyōn (Balarāman).'

**yārē nī emakku** (narr.395:1)  
[em oblique of yām 'we'; nī 'you']  
'Who are you to us?'

**amararkku mutalvan** (pari.3:53)  
[amarar 'gods, immortals'; mutalvan 'principal, chief']  
'He is the chief of gods.'

**aravu nuṅku matiyinukku ivaṇōr pōla** (kuru.395:4)  
[matiyin oblique of mati 'moon'; ivaṇōr 'people here']  
'like the people here (on earth) and the moon which is devoured  
by the snake'  
'how the people on earth respond to the eclipsed moon'

**kaṭai:** It is added to a nominal or an adjectival participle; it means 'final,  
last.'

(locative [spatial]: 'end; at')

**purāṅkaṭai p pōyiṇāl** (kali.115:12)  
[purāṅkaṭai 'back of the house'; pō 'to go']  
'She went to the back of the house.'

**perum tēr ... em mun kaṭai niṟi c ceṇṇiṇōṇē** (narr.300:5-6)  
[mun kaṭai 'front of the house'; niṟu 'to make stand, establish,  
park']  
'He parked the big chariot in front of our house, and left.'

em iḷa nalam iṛkaṭai oḷiya c cērum (narr.295:7-9)  
 [iṛkaṭai 'at the house'; oḷi 'to stay back']  
 'We shall return (to our house) so that the loveliness of our youth stays in the house.'

(locative [temporal]: 'when')

pullu maṛṛu evaṇō anpu il-am-kaṭaiyē (narr.174:11)  
 [il 'not to exist'; anpu 'love']  
 'But then, why the hug, when there is no love?'

ūr uṭaṇ āṭum-kaṭai (pari.7:76)  
 [āṭum adjp < āṭu 'to bathe']  
 'when all (the people) of the town bathe (in the river Vaiyai)'

tuvvāmai vanta-k-kaṭai (kali.22:22)  
 [vanta adjp < var 'to come']  
 'when (the misfortune of) renouncing came'

mēviṇum mēvā-k-kaṭaiyum aṭtellām nī aṛiti yāṇ aṭtu aṛikallēṇ (kali.62:3-4)  
 [mēvā adjp < mēvu 'to unite']  
 'When and when not to unite with me, you know all that. I do not know.'

**kaṇ:** It is added to a nominal or an adjectival participle. Basically, it means 'place.'

(associative: 'with')

taṅkaṇ poru kaḷiṛu (kali.60:9)  
 [taṅ oblique of tāṇ 'it'; poru 'to fight']  
 'the male elephant which fights with him'

(locative [spatial]: 'at; on; in; toward')

**teruvin̄kaṇ nin̄ru** oruvaṇ kūr̄um col (kali.60:24-25)

[**teruvin̄** oblique of **teru** 'street'; **niḷ** 'to stand']

'the words which a man says (while) **standing in the street**'

**niṇ eruttin̄kaṇ ... vaṭu** (kali.71:15-16)

[**eruttu** 'nape'; **vaṭu** 'scars']

'the **scars on your nape**'

**vērrumai eṇ kaṇṇō ōrāti** (kali.88:15)

[**eṇ** oblique of **yāṇ** 'I'; **ōr** 'to think, remember']

'Do not **think of** any difference **towards me**.'

'Do not think of me as a person with differences.'

**yār-kaṇṇum** (kali.10:3)

[**yār** who']

'**towards everyone/anyone**'

**piṇ-n-in̄-kaṇ ... alari ... āralmīṇ takai oppa** (kali.64:2-4)

[**piṇ** 'braided hair'; **alari** 'flowers'; **āralmīṇ** 'the Pleiades']

'The flowers **on** (her) **braided hair** resemble the beauty of the Pleiades, and ...'

(locative [temporal/action/state]: 'at; when; during')

**maṭai aṭaitta-k-kaṇṇum** (pari.6:82)

[**aṭaitta** adjp < **aṭai** 'to block']

'even **when** the sluice is **blocked**'

**ōrai ayaṛum aṭakkam il pōltin̄kaṇ** (kali.82:9-10)

[**il** 'to be non-existent'; **pōltin̄** oblique of **pōltu** 'time']

'**at the uncontrolled time when** (he) played (with the) **ōrai** (doll)'

**toṭaṅkaṅkaṅ** (kali.2:1)  
 [toṭaṅku 'to begin'; toṭaṅkal (verbal noun) 'beginning']  
 'in the beginning'

**nalaṅ uṭaiyār moḷikkaṅ** (kali.22:6)  
 [moḷi 'words']  
 'in the words of the lovely ones'

**pāṭi niṅṇa paci nāl kaṇṇē** (pura.237:2)  
 [paci nāl 'days of hunger']  
 'during those hungry days when (I) stood (at his door) singing (praises of him)'

**kāl(ai)**: It is added to a nominal or an adjectival participle.

(locative [spatial]: 'at; in')

**ūr-k-kāl nivanta potumpar** (kali.56:1)  
 [ūr 'town'; nivanta adjp < niva 'to grow high, stand high']  
 'the grove which stands high in the town'

(locative [temporal]: 'at; times')

**nī ōr yāṭṭu oru-kāl varavu** (kali.71:25-26)  
 [oru 'one']  
 'your arrival/visit once in a year'

**putu p puṇal pal-kāl-um āṭiya celvuḷi** (kali.98:34-35)  
 [pal 'many']  
 'when (you) go for bathing many times in the fresh (river) water'

**eṇakkē paṭuṅ-kāl paiyuḷ tīrum** (narr. 209:6-7)  
 [paṭum adjp < paṭu 'to die, fall down']  
 'When I die, my sufferings will be over.'

tiṇi nilam **kaṭanta-k-kāl** (*pari.3:54*)

[**kaṭanta** adjp < **kaṭa** ‘to leap, cross’]

‘**when** (you) **leaped over** the firm earth’

‘**when** (you) **crossed** the firm earth’

niṇ kuṇṇam kuṇuki c ciṇappu **uṇā-k-kāl** (*pari.19:93-94*)

[**uṇā** adjp < **uṇ** ‘to enjoy, experience’]

‘**when** (they) do **not** reach your hill and **experience** (your) excellence’

kallā vāy p pāṇaṇ **pukutarā-k-kāl** (*kali.70:22-23*)

[**pukutarā** adjp < **pukutar** (compound stem) ‘to enter’]

‘(if and) **when** the bard with an immature/unlearned mouth does

**not enter** (our house)’

piṇaiyal mōyiṇaḷ **uyirtta-kālai** (*aka.5:23-24*)

[**uyirtta** adjp < **uyir** ‘to sigh’]

‘**when** she smelled the string (of flowers) and **sighed**’

**kārum**: It is added to a nominal; it signifies periodicity.

(‘times’)

**ēlkārum** maḷavīṇru (*pari.11:120-121*)

[**ēl** ‘seven’]

‘begetting children in **all** of the **seven times**’

‘begetting children in **every** one of the **seven births**’

**kīl**: It is added to a nominal.

(locative [physical, hierarchical]: ‘below; by the side of’)

**kuḷa-k-kīl** viḷainta ... veṇṇel (*pura.33:5*)

[**kuḷam** ‘pond’]

‘the white paddy which grew **below** / by the side of **the pond**’

**kunra-k-kīl** (pari.19:36)  
 [kunram ‘hill’]  
 ‘below the hill’

**kāñci-k-kīl** (kali.108:63)  
 [kāñci ‘kāñci tree’]  
 ‘under the kāñci tree’

**mannavankīl** k kuṭi (kali.34:14)  
 [mannavan ‘king’]  
 ‘the subjects under the king’

(locative [temporal]: ‘under the action of’)

**ceṅkōlin ceytolir-kīl** (kali.99:11-12)  
 [cey tolil ‘accomplished action’]  
 ‘under the accomplished action of (the king’s) righteous staff/sceptre’

**koṇṭu**: It is added to a nominal, and can be used as a separate adverbial participle.<sup>34</sup>

(i) instrumental: ‘with; by’

**nuṅkōl koṇṭu** kaḷam vāḷttum (pati.43:27)  
 [nuṅ kōl ‘thin staff’]  
 ‘(he who) praises the (battle) field holding (his) thin staff’

<sup>34</sup> **koṇṭu** is a derived form (koḷ ‘to take, accept, receive’ + t past/completive marker + u adverbial participle marker). Cf. **vacciram koṇṭu** ikantu vantu eṇinteṇa (pari.5:52) ‘He carried / took hold of his weapon Vacciram, came despising (you), and threw it at (you). Therefore, ...’

**annāḷ koṇṭu irakkum ivaḷ arum peṛal uyirē** (kali.5:19)

[annāḷ 'that day']

'Her life will pass by that day / along with that day.'

**tōḷ koṇṭu maṛaikkum cālpu uṭaiyōṇ** (puṛa.311:7)

[tōḷ 'shield']

'He had the nobility of protecting (his men) with (his) shield in the battle.'

(ii) 'because of; from; thereupon'

**ciṛu puṛam kavaiyiṇaṇ āka atarkoṇṭu iku peyal maṇṇiṇ ñekilpu**

aṇar uṛra eṇ uḷ

(aka.32:9-11)

[kavai < kavi 'to cusp, hug'; atarkoṇṭu oblique of atu 'that one']

'He hugged my small back. Because of that, my heart softened like the sand wet by the rain and experienced distress, ...'

**itarkoṇṭu aṛinai**

(puṛa.381:20)

[itarkoṇṭu oblique of itu 'this one']

'Know from this.'

**cār**: It is added to a nominal. As a verb, it means 'to lean on to something.'

(locative [spatial]: 'side; vicinity')

**kāṭṭuccār k koyta ciṛu mullai**

(kali.117:11)

[kāṭṭu oblique of kāṭu 'forest']

'the little jasmine (flower) which (she) picked in the vicinity of the forest'

**cīrai:** It is added to a nominal; it means ‘side.’ Note that it is also used to refer to a bird’s wings.

(locative [spatial]: ‘side; vicinity’)

neṭu nakar **oru cīrai** ninṇaṇeṇ (*aka.162:9*)  
 [oru ‘one’]  
 ‘I stood on **one side** of the big house.’

**ñāṅkar:** It is added to a nominal or an adjectival participle.

(locative [spatial]: ‘at; on; vicinity’)

neṭuñ-kōṭṭu **ñāṅkar** (*narr.288:1-2*)  
 [kōṭṭu oblique of kōṭu ‘peak’]  
 ‘**on the tall peak**’

(locative [temporal]: ‘at’)

pularā **ñāṅkar** (*pura.374:4*)  
 [pularā adjp < pular ‘to dawn’]  
 ‘**when it is not dawn** (yet)’

nīlam pakarpavar vayal **koṇṭa ñāṅkar** malar cūḷtantu ūr pukunta ...  
 vaṇṭu (*kali.66:1-2*)  
 [koṇṭa adjp < koḷ ‘to take hold’]  
 ‘the bee circled the blue flowers **when** the sellers of those flowers  
**picked** them in the field, and entered the town (with the flowers)’



**ñānru:** It is added to a nominal or an adjectival participle.

(locative [temporal]: ‘at; when; on that day’)

maṭantai ... nōkkam ... **vilaṅku ñānrē** (aka.3:16, 17, 18)

[**vilaṅku** ‘to cross, intercept’]

‘when the glances of the young woman **cross** you (i.e., come in front of you)’

**piṛanta ñānrē**

(pari.14:25)

[**piṛa** ‘to be born’]

‘right **when** you **were born**’

**anrai ñānrīṇoṭu iṇṇi ūṅkum**

(pura.376:17)

[**anrai** ‘that day’]

‘from **that day** to this day’

**oru ñānru** vantāṇai

(kali.37:14)

[**oru** ‘one’]

‘he who came **at one time**’

**ñānrai:** It is a variant of **ñānru** and is added to an adjectival participle.

(locative [temporal]: ‘at; when’)

cērppaṇ ... **vanta ñānrai**

(narr.287:5-7)

[**vanta** adjp < var ‘to come’]

‘**when** the Cērppaṇ **came**’

**tam:** It is the oblique of **tām** ‘they, self.’ It is added to a nominal.

(genitive)

**vēntartam eyil** (pati.52:31)  
[**vēntar** ‘kings’; **eyil** ‘fortress’]  
‘fortresses of the kings’

**puraiyōrtam uḷ nīr** (kali.6:3-4)  
[**puraiyōr** ‘great people, noble people’; **tam** oblique of **tām** ‘they’]  
‘the inner quality/strength of the great ones’

**talai:** Basically, it means ‘place, location, edge.’ It is added to a nominal.

(locative [spatial]: ‘at; limit; beyond’)

**marantalai c cērntu** (pura.371:2)  
[**maram** ‘tree’]  
‘reaching the vicinity of the tree’  
‘reaching the foot of the tree’

**kaṭum tār tuyttalai c ceṇṇu** (pati.32:4)  
[**tuy** ‘edge, tip’]  
‘the fast moving front army went to the edge (of the enemy land)’  
‘the fast moving front army reached the front (of the enemy land)’

(locative [temporal/action]: ‘besides; in addition to’)

**ciṟanta kātaṟkiḷamaiyum uṭaiyaṇ atantalai innatōr kālai nillalan**  
(pura.216:9-11)  
[**atan** oblique of **atu** ‘that one’]  
‘He has very much love for me. Besides, he will not delay at a time like this.’

(‘on the pretext of; concerning; because of’; ‘toward’, with a verb of motion)

**kaṇaviṇ talai** iṭṭu uraiyal (kali.92:57)

[**kaṇaviṇ** oblique of **kaṇavu** ‘dream’]

‘what you are saying **on the pretext of** (having had) **a dream**’

**niṇ talai** varuntiyāl tuyaram cenṇaṇai kaḷaimō (kali.133:18-19)

[**niṇ** oblique of **nī** ‘you’]

‘Go and remove the grief of the woman who suffered **because of** you.’

‘Go and remove the grief of the woman who is suffering **because of** you.’

**eṇ talai** mālaiyum vantaṇṇu iṇi (kali.143:40-41)

[**eṇ** oblique of **yān** ‘I’]

‘Now, the evening also has arrived **toward/on** me.’

**taṇ**: It is the oblique of **tān** ‘self.’ It is added to a nominal.

**tantai taṇ** ūr (narr.198:4-5)

[**tantai** ‘father’; **ūr** ‘town’]

‘her **father’s** town’

tantai iraittoṭi ... **ivan taṇ** kai k kaṇ tantāriyār ... taṇ nalam pāṭuvi  
tantālā (kali.84:31-32, 34)

‘Who gave his father’s bracelet in **his (own)** hand? Did the woman (his father’s concubine) who sings of her own praises give it?’

**tīram/tīraṇ**: It is added to a nominal.

(locative [spatial]: 'in; side'; 'toward', with a verb of motion')

**avar tīraṇ celvēṇ kaṇṇaṇ** (aka.14:17)

[avar 'he (hon.)']

'I, who was going toward him, noticed ...'

**vēṭṭōr tīrattu** (kali.66:23)

[vēṭṭōr 'those who (were) desired']

'toward those whom you desired'

**yāṇai ... piṭiyōṭu oru tīraṇ oṭuṅka** (aka.91:5-6)

[oru 'one']

'as the (male) elephant moved over to one side with its female elephant'

**evvam mikutara eṇ tīrattu** (kali.110:16-17)

[eṇ oblique of yāṇ 'I']

'as distress increases in me'

( 'concerning; about')

**neṭuntakai tīrattu ... iṇaiyaḷ** (kali.76:3-4)

[neṭuntakai 'great person']

'She is like this concerning / with respect to him, the Great One.'

**toru(m)**: It is a variant of **tōrum** and is added to a nominal or a verb stem. It signifies periodicity or distribution.

(distributive [spatial]: ‘every’)

**cimaitorū**

(*pari.7:13*)

[**cimai** ‘peak’]

‘on every peak’

(distributive [temporal/action]: ‘whenever’)

**uḷḷutoru** uṭaiyum niṇ ... nōy

(*kali.35:22*)

[**uḷḷu** ‘to think’]

‘the (love)sickness of you who collapse **whenever** you **think about** (him)’

nī kaṭi koṇṭār k **kaṇaitorū** yām aḷa

(*kali.72:9*)

[**kaṇai** ‘to rush to join’]

‘as I cry **whenever** you **rush** toward the women whom you have imprisoned (for the sake of pleasure)’

**tōrum**: It is a variant of **toru(m)** and is added to a nominal.

(distributive [temporal]: ‘every’)

**nāḷtōrum**

(*kali.53:5*)

[**nāḷ** ‘day’]

‘every day’

**naṭuvaṇ**: It means ‘middle, center’, and is added to a nominal.

(locative [spatial]: ‘in the center’)

ceḷunakar **naṭuvaṇ**

(*pati.21:12-13*)

[**nakar** ‘big house’]

‘**in the center** of the big rich house’

**nāppaṇ**: It means ‘middle, center’, and is added to a nominal.

(locative [spatial]: ‘in the middle/midst of’)

pārkaṭal **nāppaṇ**

(*pari.13:26*)

[**pārkaṭal** ‘ocean of milk’]

‘**in the middle** of the ocean of milk’

vaiyeyiravar **nāppaṇ**

(*kali.59:12*)

[**vai** ‘sharp’; **eyiravar** ‘people with teeth’]

‘**in the midst of** women with sharp teeth’

**ninru(m)**: It is added to a nominal. It is recognizable as the adverbial participle of the verb **nil** ‘to stand, stay.’

(ablative: ‘from’)

yām **avaṇ-ninrum** varutum

(*malai:53*)

[**avaṇ** ‘there’]

‘We come **from there**.’

**karai-ninru** pāyvār

(*pari.10:108*)

[**karai** ‘bank, shore’]

‘those who jump (into the water) **from the bank**’

**pakkam:** It means 'side, vicinity', and is added to a nominal.

(locative [temporal]: 'at')

eḷili icai paṭu pakkam ... maññai āṭa (pari.21:30-32)  
[paṭu 'to befall, happen']  
'as the peacock danced **at the sound of the cloud(s)**'

(locative [spatial]: 'side')

pāṅkar-p-pakkattu p palli paṭṭeṇa (narr.98:5)  
[pāṅkar 'side, equality']  
'since the gecko sounded **on the same side**'

veṇ maṇal pakkam (aka.160:4)  
[maṇal 'sand']  
'**by the side of the white sand**'  
'near the white sand'

('to the accompaniment')

yāl-p-pakkam pāṭalōṭu āṭal (pari.10:56)  
[yāl 'harp']  
'dancing and singing **to the accompaniment of the harp**'

**paṭi:** It is added to an adjectival participle.

(adverb of manner)

kavutamaṇ ciṇaṇ uṇa k kal uru onriya paṭi itu (pari.19:51-52)  
[onriya adjp < onru 'to unite']  
'This is **the way** (Akalikai) united with the form of a stone as (her husband) Kavutamaṇ got angry.'

‘This is how (Akalikai) turned into a stone as (her husband) Kavutaman got angry.’

**patam:** It is added to an adjectival participle.

(locative [temporal]: ‘time’)

tēr varu-patam (kali.127:10)  
[varu(m) adjp < var ‘to arrive’]  
‘the time when the chariot arrives’

**pāṅkar:** It means ‘side, equality’, and is added to a nominal.

(locative [spatial]: ‘vicinity’)

cimaya p pāṅkar p pampiya ... mucuṇṭai veṇ pū (aka.94:1-2)  
[cimayam ‘peak’]  
‘white flowers of mucuṇṭai-vines which crowded in the vicinity of the peak’

**pāṭu:** It is added to a nominal and signifies periodicity.

(adverbial: ‘times’)

pal pāṭu (pura.211:20)  
[pal ‘many’]  
‘many times’

**pāl:** It means ‘side, section.’ It is added to a nominal.

(locative [spatial]: ‘in the group of; together with; at’)

ciṛāar-pāl paṭṭanaḷ (narr. 207:12)  
[ciṛāar ‘children’]  
‘She went in the group of children.’



**cilai-p-pāl** paṭṭa muḻavumāṇ koḻum kuṛai (*pura.374:11*)  
 [cilai ‘bow’]

‘the fat flesh of the thorny animal (porcupine) which died **at the bow**’

(directional: ‘to, toward’)

pūṇ vanta vaḻi **ninpāl** māyakkaḻavu aṇṇēl (*pari.20:76-77*)  
 [nin oblique of nī ‘you’]

‘if the way in which (my) jewelry came **to you** is not an illusive theft’

(‘for the sake of, on behalf of’)

**nuntai pāl** uṇṭi cila (*kali.85:25*)  
 [nuntai ‘your father’]

‘Eat some **for the sake of your father.**’

**pin(num)**: It means ‘after, later.’ It is added to a nominal or a past/completive adjectival participle.

(locative [temporal]: ‘then; after’)

piṛar kūṛum paḻi māṛa p **perukarpin**<sup>35</sup> (*kali.77:11*)  
 [peru ‘to experience, obtain’]

‘**when I experience** a change in the blaming words of others’

kāṭali ... ciṛu puṛam **muyañkiya pinnē** (*aka.19:18-19*)

---

<sup>35</sup> In his commentary on this poem, Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar treats **perukarpin** as a conditional. Although it has the force of a conditional in this context, the form **perukarpin** is not a conditional. It is the verbal noun **perukal** followed by the postposition **pin**. If the form is **perukirpin**, it would be a conditional. See “The Conditional” for the derivation of the conditional in classical Tamil.

[**muyaṅkiya** adjp < **muyaṅku** ‘to hug’]  
 ‘after I hug my lover’s small back’

perratu utavumiṇ tappiṇru **pinnum** ... cēralātaṇ poyyalaṇ nacaīyē  
 (pati.18:7, 12)

[**pin** ‘after, later’]  
 ‘Give to others what you have. **Even then**, there is nothing wrong,  
 (because, the king) Cēralātaṇ will not fail in giving what you wish  
 for.’

(locative [spatial, hierarchical]: ‘after, behind’)

**avan pin** toṭarūu (pari.11:111)  
 [**avan** ‘(that) he’]  
 ‘going behind him’

vēntarum vēḷirum **pin vantu** paṇiya (pati.88:13)  
 [**pin** ‘after’]  
 ‘as the kings and lords come behind you and salute you’

vīvu il **kuṭippin** irum kuṭi āyar (kali.105:7)  
 [**kuṭi** ‘clan’]  
 ‘the herdsmen of the large clan which comes after the clan that  
 never perishes’

**pinrai**: It means ‘after, later.’ It is added to a nominal or a past/completive  
 adjectival participle.

(locative [spatial]: ‘behind’)

nīrkku iyaṅku iṇa **nirai p pinrai** (aka.225:7)  
 [**nirai** ‘herd’]  
 ‘behind the herd (of cattle) that is moving toward the water’

(locative [temporal]: 'after')

**citāar kaḷainta pinrai**

(*pati.12:20*)

[kaḷainta adjp < kaḷai 'to remove']

'after removing the rags'

**pin̄nar**: It means 'after, later.' It is added to a nominal or a past/completive adjectival participle.

(locative [spatial]: 'after')

**ēr̄rin pin̄nar**

(*kali.20:22*)

[ēr̄rin oblique of ēru 'bull']

'behind the bull'

**puṭai**: It means 'side' and is added to a nominal.

(locative [spatial]: 'side')

**kamukin̄ puṭai cūḷ tenku**

(*peru.363-364*)

[kamukin̄ oblique of kamuku 'palm tree']

'the coconut trees which surround (the sides of) the kamuku trees'

**poḷutu/pōḷtu**: It means 'time' and is added to an adjectival participle.

(locative [temporal]: 'at the time; when')

**uṇṇum poḷutu**

(*kali.35:10*)

[uṇ 'to enjoy'; poḷutu 'time']

'at the time of enjoying (experiencing)'

**punaḷ ... peyyum poḷutu**

(*pari.20:106-107*)

[pey 'to pour']

'when the water pours down'

kaṇai peyal taṇ tuḷi vīcum poḷutil kuṛi vantaḷ (kali.90:22)

[vīcu ‘to blow’; Note the double markers, poḷutu and il.]

‘She came for our rendezvous at the time when the rushing rainy clouds scattered cool (rain)drops.’

vaiyai vār avir aral iṭai pōlum poḷutinān (kali.28:7)

[pōl ‘to split, flow through’; Note the stack of markers: poḷutu, in, and ān.]

‘at the time when (the river) Vaiyai flows through the long (stretch of) bright black sand’

varutum eṇru avar teḷitta pōltē (aka.194:19)

[teḷi ‘to reassure’; pōltu ‘time’]

‘the time that he reassured/specified (as the time) when he will return’

akaṇṇavar tuṇai tārā-p-poḷutiṇkaṇ (kali.120:10)

[tārā adjp < tar ‘to give’; Note the stack of markers: poḷutu, in, and kaṇ]

‘at the time when the man who has gone away does not give companionship’

**māṭṭu:** Basically it means ‘to fasten.’ It is added to a nominal.

(relational: ‘toward; in relation to’)

niṇ māṭṭu ivaḷum inaiyal (aka.2:12-13)

[niṇ oblique of nī ‘you’]

‘She is also like this toward you.’

tamiyōr māṭṭē (kuru.162:6)

[tamiyōr < tām ‘self’]

‘toward those who are by themselves’

**māṭṭai:** It is a variant of **māṭṭu** and is added to a nominal.

(relational: 'with respect to; for the sake of')

parukittai ... **ñāyar māṭṭai** p pāl (kali.85:35-36)  
 [ñāyar 'your mothers']  
 'Drink the milk, please, **for the sake of your (foster) mothers.**'

**māṇ:** It is added to a nominal.

('times; for a long time')

**paṇ-māṇ-um** kūṭi p puṇarntir piriyaṇmin (kali.92:60-61)  
 [paṇ < pal 'many, several']  
 'May you, who have been united **several times**, not be separated.'

**māttiram:** It is added to a verb stem.

(temporal limitation: 'to the extent; just for')

vauviṇaṇ **muyaṅku māttiram** vā (kali.47:21-22)  
 [muyaṅku 'to hug, embrace']  
 'Come **just for** holding and embracing.'

**māttirai:** It is a variant of **māttiram** and is added to a nominal or an adjectival participle.

(temporal limitation: 'except for; to the extent; till; just like; as if')

kai **tōyal māttirai** allatu ceyti aṟiyātu aḷittu eṇ uyir (kali.110:18-19)  
 [tōyal verbal noun < tōy 'to immerse']  
 'My life is pitiable. It does not know to do anything else except for **just immersing** in (your) hands.'

cuṭarē ... **pakal ceyyum māttirai** kai viḷakkāka k katir cila tārāy  
(*kali.142:41-43*)

[**pakal cey** 'to make things bright, to make daylight']  
'O sun, give me some (of your) rays as my hand-lamp until you  
(rise and) **make daylight.**'

imaittōr viḷitta māttirai ñērēreṇa k kuṇakku eḷu tiṅkaḷ ... iruḷ akarra<sup>36</sup>  
(*pura.376:7-8*)

As if those who were closing their eyes opened them, the moon  
rising in the east removed the darkness suddenly.'  
'Within a moment of waking, the moon rising in the east removed  
the darkness suddenly.'

**micai**: It means 'above, top', and is added to a nominal.

(locative [spatial]: 'on')

**tēr micai** (pati.34:5)  
[tēr 'chariot']  
'on the chariot'

**kunrin micai** (pari.9:71)  
[kunrin oblique of kunru 'hill']  
'on the hill'

---

<sup>36</sup> Probably, māttirai in such contexts became māṭiri 'like' in modern Tamil.

**mītu**: It is added to a nominal.<sup>37</sup>

(locative [spatial]: ‘over; on top of’)

**mālar mītu**

(*pari.7:24*)

[**mālar** ‘flower(s)’]

‘on top of the flowers’

**mīmicai**<sup>38</sup>:

(locative [spatial]: ‘on the very top’)

**tuṟukal mīmicai**

(*narr. 206:3*)

[**tuṟukal** ‘crowded rocks’]

‘on the (very) top of the crowded rocks’

**mutal (mutal)**: It is added to a nominal.

(locative [spatial]: ‘in; on; at’; root, source, beginning, bottom, beneath, toward, interior, center, locus, the first in a series of things)

**yāṇai ... neṟi mutal uṇaṅkum ... kaṭattu iṭai**

(*aka.29:16-18*)

[**neṟi** ‘way, path’]

‘in the middle of the forest where the elephant(s) become gaunt **on the way**’

<sup>37</sup> It is quite likely that it is the adverbial participle of \***mī** ‘to be on the top, to surface.’ Compare the modern Tamil form **mīti** ‘left over, remainder, excess’, which is usually derived from **mikuti**.

<sup>38</sup> Traditional grammatical description of **mīmicai** is **iraṭṭai-k-kiḷavi** “doublet.” Note that it consists of two recognizable components, **mī** ‘top, raised place’ and **micai** ‘on.’ A comparable item for **mī** in modern Tamil is **uyarē** ‘above, at a height’, and for **micai** is **mēlē** ‘on, above.’

**malaimutal āru** (aka.119:20)  
 [malai 'mountain']  
 'river **which originates in the mountain**'

kuṭa-ticai māyntu **kuṇamutal tōnri** pāyirul akaṟṟum ... nāyirū (pati.22:32-34)  
 [kuṇa 'east'; tōnru 'to appear']  
 'the sun which removes the widespread darkness, setting in the west and **appearing in the east**'

kuṭa ticai niṇru **kuṇa mutal celinūm** ... vellī (pura.386:21, 24)  
 [kuṇa 'east'; cel 'to go'; vellī 'the white one']  
 'even if Venus goes **into the east** from the west'  
 'even if Venus sets in the east, having stayed in the west'  
 (Note that this is a "from X to Y" type of construction.)

iravil muṭa p paṇaiyattu **vērmutalā** k kaṭai-k-kuḷattu k kayam kāya (pura.229:2-4)  
 [vēr 'root']  
 'as all the stars, **from the first** (star of the constellation) in the shape of a crooked palm to the last in the form of a pond, were glittering at night'

vaḷḷiyōr **cevi mutal** vayan̄ku moḷi vitti (pura.206:2)  
 [cevi 'ears, inner ear'; vitti 'to sow']  
 'sowing lucid words **in the interior** of the generous people's ears'

cēe c **cevi mutal** koṇṭu (kali.103:51)  
 [cevi 'ear(s)'; koḷ 'to take hold, grasp, grab']  
 'taking hold of the bull at the **bottom** of its ears'  
 'grabbing the bull's ears at the bottom'



**pati mutal** paḷakā p paḷaṅkaṇ vāḷkkai (pura.393:1)  
 [pati 'abode, town']

'sorrowful living that is not accustomed to the **locus of the abode**'  
 'grief stricken life that is not accustomed to the depths of the town'

tolaiyā **nēmi mutal** ... pulavar ... uraitta ... kuṇṇam pala  
 (pari.15:3-5)

'The hills which the poets praised, starting **from the immortal Nēmi**  
 (Cakkaravāḷa mountain), are many.'

(locative [temporal]: 'for the first time; in the very beginning')

kalaimāṇ **talaiyiṇ mutal mutal** kavartta kōṭal am kavaṭṭa kuṇṅkāl  
 uḷuṇcil (aka.151:7-8)

'the uḷuṇcil tree with a short trunk that has put out bent and forked  
 branches **for the first time** (and looking) **like the head** of a stag'

**murai**: It means 'manner, method, way, etc.' It is added to a nominal or  
 a verb stem.

(locative [temporal/action/situation]: 'next; in a sequence;  
 manner; turn')

mēyāyē pōla viṇavi **vaḷimurai** k kāyāmai vēṇṭuval yāṇ (kali.82:6-7)  
 [vaḷi 'way, path, route']

'I request you not to enquire (first) like a friendly person and be  
 angry **next/later**.'

**vaḷimurai** t tāy (kali.82:15)  
 [vaḷi 'route']  
 'the **next mother**'

kaṇṭārkkku **irumurai** ceyyum uruvoṭu num il **ceṇimurai** vanta  
 kaṭavuḷai-k-kaṇṭāyō (kali.93:18-20)

[iru ‘to crush, smash’; ceri ‘to join closely’]

‘Did you see the goddess who, with a form/shape **crushing** her onlookers, came to your house **for joining** you closely?’

**mun**(num): It means ‘earlier, previous’ and has a variant **munnai**.<sup>39</sup> It is added to a nominal or a participle.

(locative [spatial]: ‘in front of’)

ērri**mun** āti niru

(*kali.103:28-29*)

[ērri oblique of ēru ‘bull’]

‘standing and staggering **in front of the bull**’

(locative [temporal]: ‘before’)

tevvar cilai vicai aṭakkiya ... tānai maṇṇar ini yār uḷarō ni**n** mun**num**  
illai

(*pati.45:15-18*)

[ni oblique of nī ‘you’]

‘Now, which king is going to be like you with an army that controlled the fast pace of the enemies’ arrows? Neither was there any **before you.**’

ārattāḷ mārpum nin mārpum ōr otta nīrmaiya kol ennā mun

(*pari.20:64-65*)

[ennā negative adjectival participle < en ‘to state’]

‘**before** she could **finish saying**, “Are your chest and the chest of the woman wearing a garland of the same nature?” ...’

<sup>39</sup> Cf. attam **mun** nāḷ **umpar** k kaḷinta eṇ makaḷ ‘my daughter who passed through the forest **many days ago**’ (*narr.198:2-3*); **munnai** marapu ‘earlier convention’ (*pari.3:47*).

koyyā **munnum**

(aka.28:3)

[koy 'to pick (leaves, flowers, fruits)']

'even before picking'

**munnar**: It is a variant of **mun**, and is added to a nominal.

(locative [spatial]: 'in front of')

tāy **munnar** ... vaḷai ukupavāl

(kali.48:10-11)

[tāy 'mother']

'her bangles slip off in front of her mother'

ñāyirru **munnar** iruḷ pōla māyntatu eṇ āyiḷai ... tuyar (kali.145:65-66)

[ñāyirru oblique of ñāyiru 'sun']

'My lady's grief disappeared like the darkness in front of the sun.'

**mēl**: It means 'above', and is added to a nominal.<sup>40</sup>

(locative [spatial]: 'on; above')

yāṇai ... **eruttam mēl**

(pati.11:18-19)

[eruttam 'nape']

'on the back of the elephant'

**ukkattumēl**

(kali.94:17)

[ukkattu oblique of ukkam 'waist']

'above the waist'

<sup>40</sup> In the following contexts, **mēl** does not occur as a postposition:

'Forward': avvērriṇ mēnilai mikal ikaliṇ miṭai kaḷipu ilipu **mēl cenru** ... vellai eruttattu p pāyntāṇai (kali.104:32-35).

'Previous': nōkkiṇ piṇikkum kaṇṇoṭu **mēl nāl** nī pūppali viṭṭa kaṭavuḷai k kaṇṭāyō (kali.93:23-24).

**maran̄ mēl koṇṭu** (narr.111:4)  
 [maran̄ ‘tree’]  
 ‘straddling on the tree’

**kunrin̄mēl** (kali.27:16)  
 [kunrin̄ oblique of kunru ‘hill’]  
 ‘on the hill’

**en̄mēl allā viḷuntālai** (pari.6:88-89)  
 [en̄ oblique of yān̄ ‘I’]  
 ‘the woman who fell on me in oblivion’  
 ‘the woman who fell on me without realizing’

**kurittatan̄mēl** (kali.ka.vā:3)  
 [kurittatan̄ oblique of kurittatu ‘that which was intended’]  
 ‘toward the intended (object)’

**mēliruntu:** It contains two words **mēl** ‘on’ and **iruntu** ‘being, having been’; it is added to a nominal.

(locative [spatial]: ‘being above’)

**ēr̄rin̄ mēliruntu āṭi t tuṛai amp̄i ūrvān̄ pōl tōn̄rum avan̄** (kali.103:38-39)

[ēr̄rin̄ oblique of ēru ‘bull’]  
 ‘he, who is sitting on the bull and swaying and (therefore) looking like someone riding a raft in the waters’

**vayam:** It is added to a nominal.

(directional: 'toward; along with; together')

**vaiyai vayamāka vai** (pari.6:78)  
 [vaiyai 'the river Vaiyai']  
 'Keep (your passion) **with Vaiyai.**'  
 'Place your passion on Vaiyai.'

**vayin:** It means 'section, place.'<sup>41</sup>

(i) accusative: object

**poruḷvayin** niṇainta col (kali.17:18)  
 [poruḷ 'wealth']  
 'words that think of/express a desire for **wealth**'

(ii) 'because of'

**nam vayin** varuntum (narr.303:7)  
 [nam oblique of nām 'we']  
 'she grieves **because of me** (i.e., my departure)'

(iii) dative: 'for; for the sake of'

**poruḷvayin** ceṇṇa nam kātalar (kali.11:4)  
 [poruḷ 'wealth']  
 'our (hon.) lover who went away **for the sake of wealth**'

**puraivayin** periya nalki (pati.15:37)  
 [purai 'nobility, greatness']  
 'giving **for the sake of nobility**'

---

<sup>41</sup> Cf. **vayintōru** 'at/in every place' (narr.183:6).

(iv) locative (spatial): 'in; at; upon; on'

**neṭuvayin** oḷiṟum miṇṇu (pati.24:1)

[**neṭu** 'tall, high, long'; **vayin** 'place, path']  
'lightning which dazzles in the long path'

**maṇaivayin** palli (kali.11:20-21)

[**maṇai** 'house']  
'the gecko in the house'

tammōṇ koṭumai **nam vayin** ēṟṟi (narr.88:6)

[**nam** oblique of **nām** 'we']  
'putting his cruelty upon us'

tālai ... **kuṭa vayin** kūmpu mukai aṭṭa (narr.335:4-5)

[**kuṭam** 'hub, bulge, convex side']  
'as conical buds unfolded on the screw-pine's bulging side'

**niṇ valavayin** (pari.1:11)

[**valam** right']  
'on your right side'

(v) directional or relational: 'to; toward; of'

**ūrvayin** mīḷkuvam pōla (narr.313:8-9)

[**ūr** '(home) town, place']  
'as if we move toward our town'

**makanvayin** peyartantēṇē (aka.26:21)

[**makan** 'son']  
'I moved toward my son.'

**nam vayin** eṇ eṇa niṇaiyum kol ... makaḷē (narr.349:9-10)  
 [nam oblique of nām 'we']  
 'What will (my) woman think **of me**?'

**nam vayin** yāṇō kāṇēṇ ... nāṭaṇ varūm āṛē (narr.158:1, 2, 9)  
 [nam oblique of nām 'we']  
 'I do not see the way through which the Nāṭaṇ will come **toward us**.'

poruḷ **vayin** pirital (narr.243:9-10)  
 [poruḷ 'wealth, riches']  
 'leaving **toward** / for the sake of **wealth**'

**eṇ vayin** colla valliṟṟum ilaṇē<sup>42</sup> (aka.32:14-15)  
 [eṇ oblique of yāṇ 'I']  
 'Nor was he able to speak **to me**.'

**em vayin** uḷḷātu iruttalō aritē (pura.210:6-7)  
 [em oblique of yām 'I (hon.)']  
 'It is difficult (for her) not to think **of me**.'

**niṇvayin** parantavai uraittēm (pari.3:10)  
 [niṇ oblique of nī 'you']  
 'I talked about those who/which spread out **from you**.'

(vi) ablative: 'from'

**vīvayin** tēṇ cōra (pari.16:42)  
 [vī 'flowers'; cōr to drop']  
 'as the honey **dropped from the flowers**'

<sup>42</sup> In modern Tamil, it would be something like **eṇ iṭam colla**.

**varai**: Literally, it means ‘boundary line.’ It is added to a nominal or a verb stem.

(locative [spatial]: boundary)

**malai varai** mālai aḷi peyal (pari.10:1)

[**malai** ‘mountain’]

‘torrential rain which poured **on the mountain** in the evening’

(locative [temporal/action]: boundary)

**kaṭavarai** niṟkumō kāmam (pari.20:94)

[**kaṭa** ‘to overcome, exceed’]

‘Will passion wait **until** (it is) **overcome?**’

**kāl** varai nillā ... kaḷiṟru oruttal **yāl** varai t taṅkiyāṅku (kali.2:26-27)

[**kāl** ‘post’; **yāl** ‘harp’]

‘just as the male elephant that did not stand (bound) **at the post** stayed (still) **at the** (sound of the) **harp**’

**eṇ col** varai (kali.2:28-29)

[**col** ‘words’]

‘**at my word**’

moḷiyiṇ uṇarttum **ciṟu**varai allatu (aka.13:8)

[**ciṟu** ‘little’]

‘except for **the little time when** (he) trains (the elephant) through words’



**vaḷi:** It means ‘way, path.’ It is added to a verb stem or an adjectival participle.

(locative [spatial]: ‘at; in; through’)

**vēṇṭuvaḷi** naṭantu (pari.7:19)  
 [vēṇṭu ‘to desire, wish for’]  
 ‘(the flood) flowing **through** the **paths** it **wished**’

**kāykatirōṇ pōyavaḷi** mālai malai maṇantu (pari.20:6-7)  
 [pō ‘to go, pass’]  
 ‘joining the mountain **through** which the scorching sun **passed**’

(locative [temporal/action]: ‘at; in; through; manner’)

**pūṇ vantaḷi** niṇpāl (pari.20:76-77)  
 [vanta adjp < var ‘to come’]  
 ‘the **manner** in which the jewelry **came** to you’

**koṭumaiyum cemmaiḷum vemmaiḷum taṇmaiḷum uḷvaḷi** uṭaiyai ilvaḷi  
 ilaiyē (pari.4:50-51)  
 [uḷ ‘to exist, to be’; il ‘to be non-existent’]  
 ‘You exist **where** deviousness, forthrightness, heat, and cold **exist**;  
 you do not exist **where** they **do not**.’

**vāy:** Basically it means ‘orifice’, and is added to a nominal or an adjectival participle.

(locative [spatial]: ‘at; on’)

**niṇ tāriṇvāy** k koṇṭu muyaṅki (kali.95:14-15)  
 [tār ‘garland’; koḷ ‘to take hold, grasp, grab’]  
 ‘pulling you **by** the **garland** on your chest and hugging’

‘hugging you by grasping / holding **on to the garland** on your chest’

peṭaiyaṇṇār ... nōkkumvāy ellām (kali.102:15)  
 [nōkkum adjp < nōkku ‘to look at’]  
 ‘at all the places where the innocent women look’

**viyal**<sup>43</sup>: It is added to a nominal.

(locative [spatial]: ‘inside’)

puricaiviyal uḷḷōr (kali.81:25)  
 ‘those who live **inside the fortress**’  
 [puricai ‘fortress’]

### Vocative:

(i) no change

aṇṇal (pari.1:27)  
 ‘Noble One.’

vēntir (pura.367:14)  
 ‘Kings (second person).’

(ii) adding ē or ō at the end:

aru maṇai p poruḷē (pari.1:13)  
 [poruḷ ‘substance’; maṇai ‘Secret, the Vedas’]  
 ‘Substance of the precious Secrets.’

---

<sup>43</sup> Note that the Tolkāppiyam (collatikāram, Cēṇāvaraiyam, Rule 364) considers **viyal** as an **uriccol** (“adjective”) denoting “width/breadth.”

**māayōyē** (pari.3:1)  
 [mā(a)yōy 'you, who are dark']  
 'Dark One.'

**vāl vaḷai c ceyyāyō** (kali.14:6)  
 [ceyyāy 'you, who are red']  
 'The Red One, with white bangles.'

(iii) deletion of the final consonant in a suffix beginning with a:

**tiru maṟu mārpa** (pari.1:36)  
 [mārpan 'man with the chest']  
 'O one who has the chest with the mark of Tiru (Prosperity).'

**tol iyal pulava** (pari.3:86)  
 [pulavan 'learned person']  
 'Learned One with established/acknowledged qualities.'

**māyā manṇa** (pari.3:85)  
 [manṇan 'king']  
 'King who does not die.'; 'Immortal King.'

**ulaku āḷ manṇava** (pari.3:85)  
 [manṇavan 'established ruler']  
 'King who rules over the world.'

(iv) lengthening the vowel in the last syllable:

**aṭu pōr aṇṇāl** (pari.13:15)  
 [aṇṇal 'noble person']  
 'Noble One who kills at battles.'

**nannutāl** (kali.55:5)  
 [nannutal 'lovely forehead'; metonymy]  
 'One with lovely forehead.'

**takāa makāan** (pari.8:57)  
 [makan 'son, man']  
 'Man without (good) qualities.'

**makāaar** (pura.291:1)  
 [makār 'children']  
 'Children!'

**ilañku pūṇ māal** (pari.1:28)  
 [mal 'dark one']  
 'Dark One, with shining jewelry.'

**vāy moḷi p pulavīr** (pari.9:13)  
 [pulavir second person of pulavar 'learned ones']  
 'Learned people, who speak words of truth.'

(iv) lengthening the final vowel:

**oṇṭoṭī** (kali.60:18)  
 [oṇṭoṭi 'one wearing bright bracelets' < oḷ 'bright' + toṭi  
 'bracelets']  
 'One with bright bracelets.'

(v) changing the ai in the last syllable to āy or ōy:

**nēriḷāy** (pari.8:73)  
 [nēriḷai 'one with perfect ornaments'  
 < nēr 'perfect' + iḷai 'ornaments']  
 'One wearing perfect ornaments.'

olir vėlōy

(*pari.8:29*)

[vėlai 'one with a spear' < vėl + ai PNG]

'One with dazzling spear.'

cēval-am-koṭiyōy

(*pari.1:11*)

[koṭiyai 'one with a banner'; second person]

'One with the rooster-banner.'

## THE PARTICLES

**GENERAL:** Certain items which can be referred to as the “particles” provide nuance to nominals and verbals in classical Tamil.<sup>1</sup> The significance of these particles is not always clear. The various meanings given below for each of the particles were inferred from the literary contexts in which they appear. They do overlap. Since inferences lack universality, it is quite possible to have more than one interpretation of a particle, depending on how one understands a poem as a whole and the specific context within the poem where the particle occurs.

**FORMATION:** No obvious method to derive the particles can be suggested.<sup>2</sup> It is sufficient to treat them as given lexical items. Most of them are added to or follow nouns and verb forms as separate items.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The tradition refers to them as *iṭaicol* “medial particles.” Some modern scholars call these items “clitics.” See Schiffman (1983:137).

<sup>2</sup> A historical reconstruction of these particles is not within the scope of this study.

<sup>3</sup> A possible term for the item to which the particle is appended is “host” (cf. Schiffman 1983:137).

Some are added to another particle. Infrequently, some of them occur in isolation serving as interjections. When appended to or co-occurring with another particle, the second one reinforces the sense of the first. Particles do not indicate distinction between person-number-gender or between affirmation and negation.

The particles found in classical Tamil are: **attai**, **antil**, **antō**, **am**, **amma**, **ammā**, **arō**, **annō**, **āṅka**, **āṅku**, **āṅkē**, **ār**, **āl**, **um**, **en(n)a**, **ē**, **ō**, **ōrum**, **kāṇ**, **kurai**, **kol(l)ō**, **kon(nu)**, **tāṇ**, **til(la)**, **teyya**, **teyyō**, **marru(m)**, **marrai**, **mannē**, **man(nō)**, **manra**, **mā**, **mātu**, **matō**, **māla**, and **yāla**.

## EXAMPLES

### *Particle Significance and Example*

**attai**: It occurs during an address to the second person; in most contexts it follows an imperative/optative.

(certainty)

**paṇiyyar attai niṇ kuṭaiyē ... mukkaṭcelvar nakar valam ceyarkē**  
(*pura.6:17-18*)

[**paṇi** 'to lower']

'May your (royal) parasol be lowered, for sure, in order to go around the shrine of the Lord with three eyes.'

**nātu enappaṭuvatu ninatē attai** (*pura.35:11*)

[**ninatu** 'that which is yours']

'Yours is certainly (what deserves to be called) a country.'

(emphasis)

**ataṇ tīram attai yāṇ uraikka vantatu** (*pura.28:7*)

[**tīram** 'state, quality, nature']

'I came to talk to you about **that** state.'

**antil**: It seems to have the basic sense 'there.' Perhaps it is a composit of **anta** 'that' + **il** 'location' or the particles **am** and **til**.

(locative [spatial]: 'there')

varumē cēyīlai **antil** koḷunaṇ kāṇiya aḷiyēṇ yāṇē (*kurū.293:7-8*)

[cēyīlai 'woman wearing fine ornaments';

cē < ce 'red, fine, nice'; **īlai** 'ornaments']

'(His other) woman will come **there**. Alas, I am to be pitied.'

(locative [temporal/action]: 'there, then, thereupon')

viḷai vayal vantu iṛaikōṇṭaṇru tāṇai **antil** kaḷaiṇar yār iṇi p pīrar  
(*pati.40:5-7*)

'The army (of Cēralāṭaṇ) came and settled in the agricultural field.

**Thereupon**, who else (but Cēralāṭaṇ) will remove our distress?'

**antō**:

(pity, sympathy)

antō tāṇē aḷiyaḷ tāyē (*narr.324:1*)

'**What a pity!** Poor Mother.'

**am**: It has the basic sense 'soft, beautiful', but not in all occurrences. Its function is very similar to the case marker **in**.

(beauty)

**am** kaṇ akal vayal (*narr.210:1*)

[kaṇ 'space']

'wide field with beautiful space'



**uṇṇattu am kavaṭu** (pati.23:1)  
 [kavaṭu 'branch']  
 'the beautiful branch of the uṇṇam tree'

(comparison)

**pon am kompu** (pari.7:56)  
 [pon 'gold'; kompu 'vine']  
 'gold-like vine'  
 'golden vine'

(genitive)

**pulā am ceṅkōṭṭu** (narr.202:1)  
 [pulā < pula 'flesh'; ceṅkōṭṭu oblique of ceṅkōṭu 'red tusk']  
 'on the red tusk (of the elephant) with the flesh (of the tiger it fought with)'

**kāntaḷ am kaṇṇi** (pati.30:9)  
 [kāntaḷ, a kind of flower; kaṇṇi 'head garland']  
 'the head garland made of kāntaḷ flowers'

**maḷalai am kuṟumakaḷ** (narr. 209:5)  
 [maḷalai 'prattle'; kuṟumakaḷ 'young woman']  
 'the young woman with immature/young words'

**cūral am kaṭu vaḷi** (aka.1:17)  
 [cūral 'whirlwind'; vaḷi 'wind']  
 'swift shivering wind';  
 'blustery wind'

(locative [spatial]: ‘at; in’)

**teṇ am kumari**

(*pati.11:24*)

‘the southern Kumari (mountain)’

**amma/ammā<sup>4</sup>:**

(address requesting attention)

**nakai nanṛu amma ... ūra**

(*aka.346:1, 11*)

[**ūra** vocative of **ūraṇ** ‘man from the town’]

‘Ūra, listen. It was good fun.’

**amma vāli tōli**

(*narr.79:9*)

[**tōli** ‘female friend’]

‘Friend. May you prosper.’

(admiration, exclamation, wonder)

**tiru uṭaitamma ... niṇ ... nāṭē**

(*pati.28:1, 14*)

[**tiru** ‘Prosperity’; **uṭai** ‘to have’]

‘Your country has Prosperity.’

**pāṇ kaṭumpu aruttum cemmaṛru amma niṇ vem muṇai irukkai**

(*pura.33:14-15*)

[**cemmal** ‘beauty, rectitude, uprightness, perfection’]

‘Your stay in the terrible battlefront is perfect. (Because) it feeds groups of bards.’

---

<sup>4</sup> The Tolkāppiyam considers it a device for catching the attention of the listener (Tolkāppiyam, collatikāram, Cēṇāvaraiyam, Rule 276).

(certainty)

vēṇil vantaṇru amma tāṇē vārār ... nam katalōrē (*aka.277:18-20*)  
[var 'to come']

'Summer has arrived. Our (hon.) lover has not yet come.'

nilaṇ neḷi maruṅkiṇ nīr nilai peruka t taṭṭōr amma ivaṇ taṭṭōrē  
(*pura.18:28-29*)

[taḷ 'to obstruct']

'Only those who embanked (the water), so that the waterfronts/reservoirs would increase where the earth (level) is low, are really those who have embanked (their reputation).'

(lamentation; expressing grief or reluctance)

valam inru amma kālaiyatu paṇpu<sup>5</sup> (*pati.26:7*)  
[valam 'success'; il 'to be non-existent'; kālai 'day, day-break']  
'Alas! The nature of the day is not successful.'

innōy paṭuka til amma yāṇ (*narr.277:1-2*)  
[paṭu 'to die']

'Let me die because of this (love)sickness.'

(Note that amma follows til.)

emmaṇōr irappiṇ munṇum koṇṭir eṇa nummaṇōr maṇuttal innātu  
amma (*pura.203:4-6*)

[in 'pleasant'; innātu 'unpleasant, cruel']

'When people like us ask for alms, it is cruel (for you) to refuse (to give) saying that we received gifts in the past too.'

---

<sup>5</sup> Traditional interpretation: 'The nature of the sun is not good.'

nakaiyiṇ mikkataṇ kāmamum oṇṇu **enpa ammā** (*kali.147:13-14*)  
 [nakaiyiṇ mikkataṇ kāmam ‘excessive passion due to laughter’;  
 enpa ‘they say’]

‘Alas! They say that there is (something like) excessive passion that is to be scoffed at.’

‘Alas! They say that there is (something like) excessive passion that emerged at the time of having fun.’

(sarcasm)

nanrāl amma ... ivaḷ nalanē (*aink.248:4*)  
 [nanru ‘good (thing)’; nalan ‘well-being’]  
 ‘Her well-being is beautiful.’  
 (Note that amma follows āl.)

varuka til amma em cēri cēra (*aka.276:7*)  
 [varuka ‘Come!’]  
 ‘Come to our neighborhood.’  
 (Note that amma follows til.)

nallaḷ amma kuṇumakaḷ (*aka.326:3*)  
 [nallaḷ ‘good woman’]  
 ‘The young woman is a good woman.’

**arō**<sup>6</sup>:

(agony, pity, sympathy)

nōtaka irum kuyil ālum arō (*kali.33:24-25*)

---

<sup>6</sup> The Tolkāppiyam refers to it as an expletive: cf. collatikāram, Cēṇāvaraiyam, Rule 279. Also note that in some contexts the structure arō is not a particle, but is the combination of ar PNG + ō particle: e.g., peru maṭam uṭaiyarō ‘she has great naivete.’ Here, uṭaiyarō < uṭaiyar + ō (*aka.310:9*).

[āḷ ‘to sound’; nōtaka ‘painfully’]  
 ‘Alas! The dark cuckoo sings painfully.’

i-m-mālai aiyar avir aḷal eṭuppa arō eṇ kaiyaṟu neñcam kaṇaṇṟu tī  
 maṭukkum (kali.130:8-10)

‘Alas! My helpless heart gets angry and consumes fire (of agony),  
 while brahmins tend dazzling (ritual) fire this evening.’

(amazement)

vayal parakkum vār veḷ aruvi parantu āṇātu arō  
 mēlōr iyaṅkutaḷāl vīḷ maṇi nīlam ceṟu uḷakkum arō (pari.17:40-41)

[āṇ ‘to be content with’; uḷa ‘to stir up’]

‘The tall white waterfall spreading over the fields spreads relentlessly. Since the gods move around, the gems which fall (from their ornaments) stir up the ploughed fields on the ground.’

**annō:**

(expressing grief about the present situation; anxiety about  
 the consequence)

kaṇṇum taṇ paṇi vaikiṇa annō (narr.197:3)

[vaiku ‘to remain, stay still’]

‘Alas! Also cool drops (of tears) stayed in (her) eyes.’

mācu aṟu cuṭar nutal poṇ nēr vaṇṇam koṇṭaṇṟu annō yāṅku ākuvaḷ  
 kol tāṇē (aka.192:1-3)

[kol ‘to have, get, take hold’]

‘Alas! Her blemishless bright forehead got the color of gold (lovesick pallor). How is she going to be?’

‘Alas! Her blemishless bright forehead turned pale. What will become of her?’

nin̄ niṛam nōkki an̄nai viṇaviṇaḷ āyin̄ **annō** eṇ eṇa **uraikkō** yāṇē  
(aka.358:9-11)

‘What do I say, alas, if mother, looking at your (lovesick) complexion, asks (me for the reason)?’

(lamentation; sympathy)

eṇ tōlikku **annō** ... **kauvai ākinratu** aiya nin̄ naṭpē (narr.227:4, 9)  
[**kauvai** ‘gossip’; **āku** ‘to become’]

‘Alas! O lord, your friendship is becoming a (source of) gossip for my companion.’

kiḷiyum pantum kaḷaṅkum veyyōḷ ... muṇṇāḷ pōlāl ... eṇ **makal**  
**naṇṇar ākattiṭai** mulai viyarppa p pal kāl **muyaṅkinaḷ** maṇṇē  
**annō** (aka.49:1, 3, 7-9)

[**muyaṅku** ‘to hug’]

‘Alas! My daughter who used to like her parrot, ball, and marbles, is not like that any more; she hugged me several times as she perspired between her breasts. (I wonder what is bothering her.)’

Note that here **annō** follows **maṇṇē**.

(regret)

kāḷaikkū avaḷ tuṇivu **aṛintanen̄ āyin̄ annō** ... in̄itir puṇarkkuven̄  
maṇṇō ... tuyilē (aka.263:9-10, 13, 15)

[**aṛi** ‘to know’; **āyin̄** ‘if’]

‘If I had known about her determination about the young man, alas, I would have delightfully united them for sleeping (over here).’

### **āṅka/āṅku/āṅkē:**

**āṅkē** < **āṅku** + **ē**. **āṅku** has the basic meaning ‘there, then, at that time, immediately after.’ Whenever **āṅku** is appended to the quotative

**eṇa**, like **eṇa āṇku** ‘thus, in that manner’, it serves to separate two themes.<sup>7</sup>

(‘thus; in this/that manner; that being the case’)

vicumpu kaṭi viṭṭanru viḷavu-p-puṇal **āṇka** iṇpamum kaviṇum aḷuṅkal  
mūtūr (pari.12:99-100)

‘The sky let loose the water (in the river) for the festival. **Thus**, the ancient city brimming with pleasure and beauty ...’

eṇ iṇanta pukaḷavai eḷil mārpinaṇvai **āṇku** ... cuṇṇamōṭu oruṅku niṇ  
aṭi uṇai yām iyaintu oṇṇupu vaikalum polikeṇa ... paravutum  
(pari.1:60-64)

‘You have an enormous fame. You have a beautiful chest. **That being the case**, we pray that we, with our kith and kin, attain (the fortune of) being at your feet and prosper for ever.’

**āṇku** a-m-mū-v-iru mukaṇum muṇai naviṇṇu oḷukaliṇ (tiru:103)  
‘**Thus**, since all those six faces (of Murukaṇ) practice order, ...’

eṇa **āṇku** ... iṇaiva ... niṇ pukaḷ ētti aṇi neṭum kuṇṇam pāṭutum  
toḷutum (pari.17:47, 49, 50-51)

‘**In this manner**, Lord, we praise you and sing of your beautiful hill and salute it.’

---

<sup>7</sup> Traditional commentators usually refer to these forms as “**acai**” or “**acai nilai**.” Their cryptic usage of the term **acai** has led to underestimation of the function of these words. These words have specific semantic and prosodic functions as **urai-y-acai** “a meaningful word which functions as a metrical foot (**cīr**)” or **oḷi-y-acai** “a single **acai** standing alone as the first foot in a line (**aṭi**),” or a **vaḷi-y-acai** “a foot standing at the end of a line to be combined with the next line to make sense.” See “**corcīr aṭi**” in “Theory of Classical Tamil Poetry” for more.

tām añciyatu āṅkē aṇaṅku ākum eṇṇum col (kali.24:1, 2)  
 ‘the saying that what one is afraid of will become an affliction in  
 the same manner’

**ār**: It is always appended to the particle **um** ‘and, too, even.’

(‘a vast deal’)

maṇai keḷu peṇṭirkku nōvumār peritē<sup>8</sup> (aiṅk.382:5)  
 [nōvu ‘pain’]  
 ‘The pain (of separation from their men) is **very much** for those  
 women who stay at home.’

(certainty; emphasis)

atu tāṇ ellārum uvappatu aṇṇiyum nal āṇṇu p paṭūm neriyumār  
 atuvē (pura.195:7-9)  
 [neri ‘precept’]  
 ‘That is what everyone enjoys. Not only that, it is the precept  
 which guides (everyone) in good path.’

**āl**: It is always appended to a finite verb/predicate. It differs from the  
 case marker **āl** in significance and pattern of occurrence. When  
 describing a place with its various activities, the narration ends with  
 this particle or begins with an expression ending with this particle.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Traditional commentators take **m** and **ār** together and treat **mār** as a sound filler or  
 separate **ār** from **um** and think of it as a sound filler: e.g., āṇē ... koṇṇaiyoṭu malarnta  
 kuruntumār uṭaitē (aiṅk.436:1, 3) ‘The path has kuruntu trees which have bloomed along  
 with the koṇṇai trees.’ The Old Commentary on this text notes that **ār** here is a sound filler.  
 However, it is worth noting that the verb **ār** means ‘to be full.’

<sup>9</sup> Cf. iṇṇupūṭal peritē ‘The amazement is great, indeed.’ (pati.33:1).



(amazement)

muṇkai ... vīci valluvai maṇṇāl naṭaiyē ... malai vayiṇāṇē  
(aka.257:10-12, 21)

[val 'to be skilled; be able']

'You are skilled in walking through the mountain, swinging your forearms.'

(Note that āl follows man.)

('indeed; certainly; definitely')

maṇattaṅku aritāl ... arivai maḱilntu ayaṇṇalaiyē (naṇṇ.42:1, 12)  
[aritu 'is difficult']

'It is certainly difficult to forget how the young lady rejoices.'

niṇ kalkelu ciṇṇu kuṭi eytiya piṇṇai ūtal vēṇṭumāl ciṇṇitē ... nāy payir  
... koṭē (aka.318:11-13, 15)

[ūtal vēṇṭum 'must blow']

'After reaching your small residence in the mountains, you must definitely blow for a bit the horn which (normally) calls out to (your hunting) dogs.'

ūra poyyāl aṇiven niṇ māyam (aka.256:7-8)

[poy 'a lie']

'O Ūra, it is a lie. I know of your illusion / illusive acts.'

(optative)

āṇṇiṇ vārār āyiṇum āṇṇa ēṇai ulakattum iyaivatāl namakku  
(kuri:23-24)

[iyaivatu 'that which is possible'; here, used as an optative]

'Even if he does not come (asking) for us through proper custom, may it (his friendship) be possible for us in the next world.'

(sarcasm)

kaḷaṅkiṇāṇ aṛikuvatu eṇṛāl naṇṛāl amma niṇṛa ivaḷ nalaṇē

(*aiṅk.248:3-4*)

[**naṇru** 'good thing']

'If one could know (the cause of her lovesickness) by the marbles, her remaining loveliness will **be good**.'

'If one could find out (the cause of her lovesickness) by the marbles, her remaining loveliness will **do well**.'

('to prevail')

kūtir niṇṛaṇṛāl pōtē

(*neṭu:72*)

[**niṇṛaṇru** 'it stayed']

'The cold **prevailed** at that time.'

**um**: The sense 'even, also, too' is obtained when **um** is suffixed to only one nominal in the sentence. The sense 'and' is obtained when **um** is suffixed to nominals in a coordinate construction sharing the main verb. The sense 'not only' is obtained when **um** is suffixed to **aṇṛi** 'not being so.' The sense 'neither ... ; nor ... ' is obtained when **um** is suffixed to nominals or verbals in separate clauses and the main verb in each clause is negative.

('also, too, even')

ciṛanta aṇṇiṇar cāyalum uriyar

(*narr. 208:8*)

[**cāyal** 'gentleness']

'He has great love (for me). He is **gentle too**.'

kaṭuvaṇum ariyā k kātu

(*aiṅk.374:4*)

[**kaṭuvaṇ** 'male monkey'; **kātu** 'jungle']

'jungle which **even a male monkey** does not know (well)'

oru tām ākiya **perumaiyōrum** tam pukaḷ niṟī c ceṇru māyntaṇarē  
(*pura.366:4-5*)

[**perumaiyōr** ‘people with greatness’]

‘Even the great ones, who were unique, established their reputation, left, and perished (eventually).’

**innatūum** kāṇāṇ kaḷitalum uṇṭu (*kali.37:9-10*)

[**innatu** ‘this; of this nature’]

‘He might leave without seeing even this.’

veyil tukaḷ **anaittum** (*pati.20:6*)

[**anaittu** ‘that; of that nature’]

‘even (as little) as the (dust) particles (visible) in the rays of the sun’

(conjunction: ‘and; not only; neither ... nor ...’)

neṭiya **molitalum** kaṭiya ūrtalum celvam aṇru taṇ ceyviṇai p payaṇē  
(*narr. 210:5-6*)

[**molital** ‘speaking’; **ūrtal** ‘riding’]

‘Talking big and riding fast vehicles are not (true) wealth; they are the fruits of one’s actions.’

atu tāṇ ellārum uvappatu **anriyum** nal āṟruppaṭūum neṟiyumār atuvē  
(*pura.195:7-9*)

[**anri** ‘not being so’]

‘That is what everyone enjoys. Not only that, it is the precept which guides (everyone) in good path.’

ceṇrōr mukappa p **poruḷum** kiṭavātu oḷintavar ellārum **uṇṇātum**  
cellār (*kali.18:5-6*)

[**poruḷ** ‘wealth, riches’]

‘Wealth will not be lying still for the passers by to fetch. Neither would all the people who go there pass without consuming/enjoying it.’

(comparison)

pirinta **namminum** iraṅki (*narr.208:9*)  
 [nam oblique of nām ‘we (hon.)’]  
 ‘pining more than I who departed (from her)’

(emphasis)

**nanrum** taṭaiiya meṇ tōḷāy (*kali.93:5*)  
 [nanru ‘good thing’]  
 ‘O one with soft shoulders which are well rounded.’  
 (The adverbial sense of āka is conveyed here by um.)

(inclusive; closing a set of items)

nīr nilam tī vaḷi vicumpōṭu **aintum** aḷantu kaṭai aṟiyiṇum aḷappu  
 arum kuraiyai (*pati.24:15-16*)  
 [aintu ‘five’]  
 ‘You are difficult to be measured even if one could measure and understand the limits of all the five (elements) such as the water, the earth, the fire, the air, and the sky.’

**yāvarum** kaṇṭu mati maruḷum vāṭā c conṛi (*pati. 24:21-22*)  
 [yāvar ‘anyone, who?’]  
 ‘the limitless (amount of) rice which everyone looks at and is awestruck by’  
 ‘the limitless (amount of) rice which amazes every onlooker’

(sound filler)

karuvi vāṇam **talaiiyāṅku**ṁ ītta niṇ pukaḷ (*pura.159:19-20*)

[**talaii** advp < **talai** 'to fall in a place']

'your reputation, who gave (to the suppliants) just like the cloudy sky poured'<sup>10</sup>

(Note that **um** is appended to **āṅku**.)

**ena**: See also "Imitative Words."

(enumerative, quotative)

onṛu **ena** iraṇṭu **ena** mūṇṛu **ena** ... toṇṭu **ena** nālvakai ūḷi navirṛum  
ciṛappinai (*pari.3:77-80*)

'You are illustrious. In all the four types of eons, you are praised as (manifesting in) one, two, three, (four, five, six, seven, eight), and nine (elements and senses).'

**ē**: It is the most widely used particle in this period and its various meanings are not easily distinguished. It occurs at the end of a noun, finite verb, or the entire poem. When describing a place with its various activities, the **ē** serves to separate the various parts of the narration. It means 'whereas', 'on the other hand', etc.

(admiration)

nilam nīr vaḷi vicumpu **enra** nāṅkiṇ alappu **ariyaiyē** (*pati.14:1-2*)  
[**ariyai** 'you are difficult' < **aru** 'to be difficult']

<sup>10</sup> The interpretation given here follows U.V. Saminathier's commentary. Another possible interpretation is to take **āṅku** to mean 'there/then' and **um** 'even.' Then the particle **um** would have a purpose: 'The sky with patchy clouds rained heavily. **Even then** you gave to the suppliants. Such reputation ...'

**‘You are difficult** to be measured (understood) like the four such as the earth, the water, the wind, and the sky.’

celvam iṇitu kaṇṭikumē (pati.11:20)  
 [kaṇṭikum ‘we saw’ < kāṇ ‘to see’]  
 ‘We saw (your) wealth/riches well.’

(adverb of manner; ‘as’)

vem curam taniyē irappa (kali.23:3-4)  
 [tani ‘alone’; ira ‘to cross over, pass through’]  
 ‘as you cross over the hot forest alone’

ollaiyē uyir vauvum uru (kali.58:17)  
 [ollai ‘fast’; vauvu ‘to grab, snatch’]  
 ‘your appearance/shape which snatches (my) life (breath) fast’

(completing a statement or poem)

pācaṛai niṭṭinai ākaliṇ kāṇku vanticinē (pati.16:8-9)  
 [vanticin ‘I have come’ < var ‘to come’]  
 ‘Since you delayed at the war camp, I have came to see you.’

(emphasis; certainty)

teruḷa niṇ varavu aṛital maruḷ aṛu tērci munaivarkkum aritē (pari.1:29-30)

[aritu ‘that which is difficult’; munaivar ‘those who concentrate’]  
 ‘Even for those who focus their attention and are sure of things without illusion, it is difficult, indeed, to know about your origin clearly.’

evvayiṇōyūm **nīyē** niṇ ārvalar toḷuta kai amaitiyiṇ amarntōyūm **nīyē**  
(*pari.4:70-71*)

[**nī** 'you']

'**You are the one** who are everywhere. **You are the one** who have settled in your devotees' hands which are closed up for prayer.'

veriyūm uḷavē (*pari.5:15*)

[**veri** 'frenzied dance'; **uḷa** 'there are']

'There are **also** instances of the **frenzied dance**.'

(Here the **ē** emphasizes the sense of **um** which in this context means 'too, also.')

(exclusive)

tunṇarum kāṇam eṇṇāy **nīyē** ... ivaḷ iṇṭu oḷiya ālvinaikku akarī āyiṇ  
(*narr.205:5-7*)

[**nī** 'you']

'without thinking of the forest that is difficult to get through, if **you** were to depart **by yourself** for the sake of manly duties while she is left here'

(immediacy; simultaneity)

yāṇ eṇcātu oru kai maṇal koṇṭu mēl tūva k **kaṇṭē** kaṭitu ararri p  
pūcal toṭaṅkiṇaṇ (*kali.65:20-22*)

[**kaṇṭu** advp < **kāṇ** 'to see']

'Without being actionless, I grabbed the sand in one hand and threw it at him. **Seeing that**, he blabbered **immediately** and started to scream.'

nil eṇa niṛuttāṇ **niṛuttē** vantu (*kali.55:6*)

[**niṛu** 'to make stand, stop']

‘He stopped me saying “Stop!” **Stopping** (me), he came (toward me) immediately, and ...’

(rhetorical; question marker)

nāl kuraipaṭutal kāṇunar yārē (pari.11:38)  
[yār ‘who?']

‘**Who** are those who (can) see that the days (of life) are diminishing?’  
(It implies a negative answer.)

aṛivum pukaḷum uṭaiyōr māyntēṇa vaṛuntalai ulakamum **anrē**  
(pura.206:8-9)

[**anru** ‘it is not’]

‘The world **is not** an empty space, with the learned and famous people gone, **is it?**’

eṇai nāl taṅkum num **pōrē**, aṇai nāl eṇiyār eṇital yāvaṇatu  
(pura.301:7-8)

[**eṇai nāl** ‘how many days?’; **aṇai nāl** ‘those many days’;  
**taṅku** ‘to stay’; **pōr** ‘war’]

‘For how many days **the war** will last, for those many days, where will you see (him) fighting with those who do not fight with him.’

‘No matter how long the war lasts, you will not see him fighting with people who cannot fight back.’

(Actually, **ē** serves as a rhetorical question marker here, but with an additional purpose. An interrogative word [**eṇai nāl** ‘how many days’] begins a clause in which the particle **ē** is appended to the noun [**pōr** ‘war’] referred to by the interrogative and closes the clause. The next clause begins with the deictic **a** ‘that’ [**aṇai nāl**]



‘those days’], referring back to what was referred to by the interrogative [**enai**]. The combination **e... ...ē, a...** gives the sense ‘However/Whatever ..., that ... .’)

**cēṇṇi cēvaṭi cērttiṇ eṇ eṇappaṭumō eṇṛalum uṇṭē** (*narr.342:9-10*)  
[**uṇṭu** ‘there is’]

‘If I make my head join (her) red feet, is it likely that (she) would ask “What is it?”’

‘If I fall at her decorated feet, would she care to ask me “What is it?”’

(serial; reckoning)

**cinanē** kāmam kaḷi kaṇṇōṭṭam ... teraḷ kaṭumaiyoṭu piṛavum  
(*pati.22:1, 3*)

[**cinan** ‘anger’]

‘**anger**, passion, excessive pity, the harshness of killing, and others’  
(Here, **ē** occurs only at the end of the first item in the list, **cinan**.)

(separating several themes)

**nī ēntiya paṭaiyē onṇār uṭaṅku uṇṇum kūṛṛam uṭalē poṇ nēṛpu avir**  
**aḷaḷ nuṭakku ataṇ niraṇē** (*pari.2:49-51*)

[**paṭai** ‘weapon’; **uṭal** ‘body’]

‘**The weapon** (discus) that you carry consumes (your) enemies all at once. **Its body** is Death. **Its color**, the swaying flame of bright gold-like fire.’

**kuṛumakaḷ ... tīṅkural kiliyum tām aṛipavvē enakkē paṭuṅkāl paiyuḷ**  
**tīrum** (*narr.209:5-7*)

[**aṛipa** ‘they know’ < **aṛi** ‘to know’; **eṇ** oblique of **yān** ‘I’]

‘Even the parrots (in the millet field) **know** the young woman’s sweet voice. **My suffering, on the other hand**, will be over (only) when I die.’

**ō**: See also “Vocative” in “Case Markers And Postpositions.”

(ablative: ‘from’)

ellām tuyilō eṭuppuka (kali.70:21)

[tuyil ‘sleep’; eṭu ‘to raise, arouse’]

‘Let everything (like, the sound of the drum, the sound of the tuṇaṅkai dance, and the sound of the bells on your chariot) **arouse** me **from sleep**.’

(amazement)

annaiyō yām em makaṇai p pārāṭṭa k katumeṇa t tām vantār ... yār  
kolō (kali.85:29-31)

[annai an address form]

‘Wow! When I was praising my son, he arrived suddenly. Who is he?’

(interrogative)

niṇ niṇam nōkki annai viṇaviṇaḷ āyiṇ annō eṇ eṇa uraikkō yāṇē  
(aka.358:9-11)

[uraikkō < uraikku ‘I will say’ + ō]<sup>11</sup>

‘What do I say, alas, if mother, looking at your (lovesick) complexion, asks (me for the reason)?’

---

<sup>11</sup> It is possible to derive this from uraikka + ō.

puṇattu erpaṭa **varukō** ... cāral āṭukam **varukō** ... kūṟu iṇi  
(*narr.204:2, 4*)

[**varukō** < **varuku** 'I shall come' + **ō**]<sup>12</sup>

'Shall I come to the (millet) field after the sun set? Or, shall I come to the mountain slope for playing? Tell me now.'

**añcāyō** ivaḷ tantai kai vēlē (*aink.60:4*)

[**añcu** 'to fear']

'Won't you fear the spear in her father's hand?'

(reckoning)

ūroṭu niṟai cāl viḷupporuḷ tarutal **onrō** ... eri parappi p pakai ceytu  
paṇpu il āṇmai tarutal **onrō** ... iraṇṭiṇuḷ **onru** ākāmaiyo aritē<sup>13</sup>

(*pura.344:3-7*)

[**onru** 'one thing']

'It would be certainly rare if one of these two would not become true: **one**, (her relatives) giving their town along with plenty of supreme riches (to her suitors); **another one**, (her suitors) showing unscrupulous manliness by spreading fire (in her town) and bringing hostility.'

(reinforcing the preceding item)

pāṭukam **vammiṇō** paricil māḱkaḷ (*pura.32:6*)

[**vam** < **var** 'to come']

'Come, Suppliants. Let us sing.'

<sup>12</sup> Some might derive this from **varuka** + **ō**.

<sup>13</sup> The traditional commentator U.V. Saminathier considers **onrō** to be the particle, not just the **ō**.

kalīru annān tannai oru penṭir aruḷa-k-kiṭantatu **evan** kolō  
(kali.61:18-19)

[**evan** 'how?']

'How is it that a woman has to show mercy to a man who is like a bull elephant?'

'How could a man, who is like a bull elephant, lie still, so a woman shows him mercy?'

(rhetorical question)

kāmar perukku **anrō** vaiyai varavu (pari.6:69-70)

[**perukku** 'flooding'; **anru** 'it is not']

'The flooding in Vaiyai is desirable, is it not?'

(separator; 'on the other hand; whereas')

turaivan **enakkō** kātalan **anaikkō** vēṛē (aink.156:4-5)

[**enakku** 'for me'; **anaikku** 'for mother']

'The man from the water-front is lover to me, whereas he is someone else for my mother.'

anaiyavai pōrri niṇaiyaṇa nāṭi k kāṇ vaḷamaiyō vaikalum ceyal  
ākum (kali.15:23-24)

[**vaḷamai** 'riches, bounty']

'Consider those things and seek what you intend. Riches, on the other hand, can be obtained any day.'

nammaiyo maṇantaikka ... kūṭalum uḷḷārkol (kali.27:10,12)

[**nam** oblique of **nām** 'we']

'He may forget about us. On the other hand, won't he remember even Kūṭal (Madurai)?'

‘He may forget about us. But won’t he remember even Kūṭal (Madurai)?’

**ōrum**: It is possible to interpret **ōrum** as an adjectival participle derived from **ōr** ‘to think about; to search for.’ It has the force of an adjectival participle or a finite verb.<sup>14</sup>

(comparison)

maṭa **mayil ōrum** maṇaiyavar (pari.19:21)  
 [mayil ‘peacock’]  
 ‘women at home who are like innocent peacocks’  
 ‘women at home who reminds us of peacocks’

**kāṇ**: It has the basic sense ‘to see, look into, realize.’ When used as a particle, it verifies a fact and/or alerts one to reality.

(verification)

tērtarṅku **aritu kāṇ**<sup>15</sup> (pari.22:34)  
 [aritu ‘is difficult’]  
 ‘It is difficult to be sure of ..., you see.’

cērppa **koṭiyai kāṇ nī** (kali.125:15)  
 [koṭiyai ‘you are cruel’ < koṭu ‘to be crooked, cruel’]  
 ‘Cērppa. You are cruel, you know.’

<sup>14</sup> Cf. miṇ **ōrum** kaṇ āka ‘lightning (which helps) a s searching eyes’ (kali.49:12); taṇittu ōr tēr vantu peyamṭatu eṇpa atarṅkoṇṭu **ōrum** alaikkum aṇṇai ‘They say that a lone chariot (of my lover) came and left. Consequently, mother **thinks** about it and hits me’ (kuṟu.246:3-5). In most contexts, traditional commentators refer to **ōrum** as a sound filler.

<sup>15</sup> The earliest commentator on this text, Parimēlaḷakar, considers **kāṇ** as a sound filler.

virumpi nī eṇ tōḷ eḷutiya toyvilum ... niṇ maintu-uṭai mārpil cuṇaṅkum  
**niṇaittu k kāṇ** ... aritu arō ceṇṇa ilamai taraṅku

(*kali.18:2, 3-4, 11-12*)

[**niṇaittu** < **niṇai** ‘to think’]

‘**Think about** the things you have painted willingly on my (friend’s) shoulders; and about the passion marks caused by your strong chest. Then **realize** (among other things) that (if you leave now) it would be difficult, indeed, to bring back the youth that has gone.’

**kurai**: As a verb it means ‘to sound, roar.’<sup>16</sup>

(quality; characteristic)

aḷappu arum **kuraiyai**

(*pati.24:16*)

[**aru** ‘rare, be difficult, precious’]

‘You have the **quality** that is difficult to be measured/understood.’

**kaṭumkurai** arumaiya kāṭu

(*kali.13:25*)

[**kaṭu(m)** ‘intense, severe’]

‘the forests are **severely/extremely** difficult (to pass through)’

**nēvarum kuraiya** kalam keṭiṇ puṇarum

(*kuri:14*)

[**nēr** ‘perfect’; **var(u)** ‘to bring’]

‘If jewels with **perfect quality** are damaged, they will join (when someone fixes them).’

<sup>16</sup> Traditional commentators consider **kurai** as a sound filler: cf. Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar’s commentary on *kuri:14*, where he refers to **kuraiya** as an “acai.”

**kol(lō):**

(interrogative; wonder)

arivaikku yārkol aliyai (pati.19:14-15)

[yār ‘who?']

‘You are to be sympathized/pitied. **Who** are you to the young woman?’inroṭu pōyinrukollō tāṇē ... ivaḷ māmai k kaviṇē (narr.205:7-8, 11)

[pōyinru ‘it left’ &lt; pō ‘to go’]

‘Perhaps her dark attractive beauty left (her) today.’

inṇakaiyavar cīraṇi vaiyaikku aṇikollō vaiyai taṇ nīr aṇi nīttam

ivarkku aṇikol

(pari.22:31-33)

[aṇi ‘beauty, decoration’]

‘Is the beautiful row of sweet-smiling women a **decoration** for Vaiyai? Is Vaiyai’s waves of water a **decoration** for them?’

naṇāḷkol tōḷi

(pari.12:45)

[nāṇ(u) ‘to be coy, be bashful’]

‘Won’t she be coy, my Friend?.’

**kon(nu):**

(excessive: ‘greatly; for no good reason; without use’, etc.)

avar konnu nampum kuraiyar tāmē

(narr.208:6-7)

[nampu ‘to believe, trust’]

‘He has the quality of **being trusted greatly**’

‘He is greatly to be trusted’

nannutal inru māl ceyteṇa k **kon** onru kaṭuttanaḷ annai (*aink.194:3-4*)  
 [kaṭu ‘to chide, to show signs of anger’]  
 ‘Her lovely forehead confused her mother, and mother showed a great deal of anger.’

kaṇṇi piṇṇu p puram tāḷa k **konnē** cūṭṭi (*aka.180:6-7*)  
 [cūṭṭu ‘to make wear’]  
 ‘putting the string of flowers to lie low on her braided hair without any purpose’<sup>17</sup>

**tān:**

(emphasis)

nallatu ceital āṇṇir āyiṇum allatu ceital ōmpumiṇ **atutān** ellārum  
 uvappatu (*puṇa.195:6-8*)  
 [atu ‘that one’]  
 ‘Even if you are unable to do good, check/prevent yourself from doing bad. That (indeed) is what everyone enjoys.’

yān celiṇ nanti c ceṇiṇ cāmpum ivaḷ eṇṇum **takaiyōtān** ... ētilār toṭi  
 urra vaṭu k kāṭṭi iṇku em il varuvatai (*kali.78:19-22*)  
 [takai ‘quality, nature, characteristic’]  
 ‘You are coming here to our house showing off your scars made by other women’s bracelets. Is it indeed your nature to think “She will exult if I go (to her) but will wither if I resent her”? ’

---

<sup>17</sup> **kon** in another context has been taken to denote “time” instead of meaning ‘without any purpose’: niṇ mukam tān peṇiṇ allatu **konnē** maruntu piṇitu yātum illēṇ (*kali.60:20-21*): cf. Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar’s commentary on these lines.



(reflexive)

nakai nan̄ru amma t̄anē (aka.400:1)  
 [t̄an̄ ‘self, it’]  
 ‘It was good fun.’

**til(la):** It expresses a sense of wishing or possibility based on a condition.

(wish)

innē muṭikatil amma ... pācaṛai t toḷilē (neṭu:168, 188)  
 [muṭika ‘May it end’]  
 ‘May the (king’s) work at the war camp come to a conclusion today.’

pacappu nī viṭiṇ celvēmṭilla yāmē (aink.429:1-2)  
 [viṭu ‘to let go’; cel ‘to go, leave’]  
 ‘I shall leave (in search of wealth) if you let go your lovesick pallor.’

kāṇkuvemṭilla avaḷ kaviṇ peṛu cuṭar nutal ... vēntu toḷil viṭiṇē (aink.443:3, 5)  
 [kāṇ ‘to see’]  
 ‘I shall see her beautiful bright forehead, if the king completes/ends his task.’

(reluctance)

polam pūṇ vēntar palartil amma (pati.64:2)  
 [palar ‘many people’]  
 ‘The kings with gold ornaments are numerous, you know.’

**kātalar maṛantaṇarōtil maṛavā nammē** (aīnk.319:3-4)  
 [maṛantaṇarō ‘did he forget?']  
 ‘Has my lover forgotten me who has not forgotten him?’

**em mutumai eḷḷal aḥtu amaikumtilla** (aka.6:14-15)  
 [amaikum ‘We/I (hon.) will accept / be calm’]  
 ‘Do not mock at my aging. I shall accept it.’  
 ‘Do not mock at my old age. It is acceptable to me.’

**teyya**: It functions like the particle **attai**, but is not always addressed to the second person.

(suggestion)

**iṇru nī ivanaī āki ... taṅkiṇ evaṇō teyya** (narr.215:8-9)  
 [taṅkiṇ conditional < taṅku ‘to stay over’; evaṇ ‘what?’, ō particle]  
 ‘What if you become one (of us) here now and stay over?’

**peṇṇai naṭuvaṇatuvē teyya ... nallōḷ tantai ciṟu kuṭi p pākkam** (nārr.323:1-2, 6)  
 [naṭuvaṇatu ‘that which is in the middle’; ē particle]  
 ‘The Pākkam, where the good woman’s father’s small clan lives, is among the peṇṇai trees.’

(adverbial)<sup>18</sup>

**col iṇi t teyya yām teḷiyum āṛē** (aka.220:22)  
 [col ‘to tell’; iṇi ‘now’]  
 ‘Tell us now clearly, how we can be reassured.’

<sup>18</sup> It is not clear whether **teyya** in these examples can be interpreted simply as an address form.

oyya-p-pōvālai ... **teyya** neṛi maṇal **nēṭṭinar** cella (*pari.20:41-43*)  
[**nēṭṭu** 'to look for'; **cel** 'to go']

'as they went along the sandy path looking intently for her who rushed to escape'

(Note that **teyya** here is not addressed to someone in the second person.)

ivaḷ nalam paṇṭum iṇṇē **kaṇṭicin** **teyya** (*narr.35:7-8*)  
[**kaṇṭicin** 'you see' < **kāṇ** 'to see']

'Her wellbeing was like this even in the past. See this well.'

**teyyō**: It is a variant of **teyya**, except that it occurs only in the second person.

(address)

vārāyāyiṇ **vālēm** **teyyō** (*aink.239:5*)  
[**vāl** 'to live, thrive']

'If you do not come (to visit us) we shall not survive.'

**maṛṛu(m)**: **maṛṛu/maṛṛai** means 'the other.'<sup>19</sup>

('however; but then; nevertheless')<sup>20</sup>

ītal māṭṭu otti ... **maṛṛu** ovvāti ... makaḷirai nuntai pōl nōy kūra  
nōkkāy viṭal (*kali.86:21-24*)  
[**o** 'to be like, resemble']

<sup>19</sup> Cf. aintalai avir poṛi aravam mūtta maintaṇ aruku oṇṇu **maṛṛu** iḷam pārppu (*pari.19:72-73*).

<sup>20</sup> One traditional commentator's definition of **maṛṛu** as **vinai māṛṛu** 'change of action' in one context is worth noting. See Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar's commentary on *kali.93:10*.

‘Be like your father with respect to giving. **But then, do not be like him. Do not leave (your) women without paying attention when their lovesickness (for you) increases.**’

maṭamakal ... ullal kūṭatu eṇrōy marṛum ... pōtal ollāl eṇ neñcattāṇē  
(*narr.201:1, 4, 12*)

[pō ‘to leave’; ol ‘be able, possible’]

‘You said that I should not think of that innocent woman. **But then, she is unable to leave my heart.**’

(answer: ‘otherwise; in response to; then’)

cen-tiṇai kaṭiyum uṇṭaṇa ... mauvalum arumpiṇa ... naḷ iruḷ varaiyaka  
nāṭaṇ varūum eṇṇpatu uṇṭukol aṇṇukol yātukol marṛu  
(*narr.122:2, 4, 5-7*)

[yātu ‘what?’; kol particle]

‘The red millet (plants) are guarded. The wild jasmine are in bloom. Will the man from the mountainous country come (for a rendezvous) in the thick of the night? Will he not? **Then, what?**’

nāṭaṇ paṇ malai arum curam iṇappiṇ nam viṭṭu yāṅku vallunam  
marṛē ... paṭuttal ... kaṇṇē  
(*narr.171:5-8, 11*)

[kaṇ paṭuttal ‘making the eyes sleep’]

‘If the Nāṭaṇ leaves us and goes through the difficult mountainous forest, **then how can we close our eyes (for sleeping)?**’

nāṇāḷkol tōḷi ... parattaiyiṇ tōḷi nalam uṇṭu tuṇṭāṇ eṇa orutti yāṇar  
mali puṇal nīttattu irum piṭi cēṇa verinil ciṇṭāṇōṭu ēriṇāl nāṇu k  
kuṇaivilaḷ naṅkai marṛu  
(*pari.12:45-49*)

[nāṇukkuṇaivu ‘virtue of shame’]

‘Isn’t she ashamed of herself? My friend, he (her lover) enjoyed the loveliness of another woman and left her (too). Now, this (shameless) woman got on the back of a tall dark elephant with him in the floods of Vaiyai. She does not have the **virtue of shame to respond** (to his act).’

(‘moreover; in addition to; thereafter’)

tantai kāmura toṭakkattu tāy ulai p pukkārku avaḷum ... perumān  
nakai mukam kātṭu eṇpāl kaṇṇīr cori muttam kāl cōrva pōṇraṇa  
**marṛum** vaḷimurai t tāy ulai p pukkārku avaḷum ... muyaṅkiṇal  
... koḷvaṇa nāṭi aṇintaṇal (kali.82:10-19)

‘(My little son) went near the woman whom his father took as a lover in the beginning. Saying to him, “Lord, show me your smiling face,” that woman shed tears which resembled pearls falling off a string. **Thereafter**, he went near the next woman his father took as lover. This woman hugged him and put on him carefully chosen proper jewelry.’

cerukkoṭu niṇra kālai **marṛu** ... kallā ilaiṇar colli k kātṭa  
(poru:89, 100)

‘When we stood there with triumphant joy, (the king’s) young men (in attendance) **then** told (the king about us) and showed (us to the king), and ...’

(another kind)

maṇippīli cūṭṭiya nūloṭu **marṛai** aṇippūlai āvirai erukkoṭu piṇittu yāttu  
(kali.138:8-9)

‘together with the thread holding the peacock feathers, he tied **yet another** string (of flowers) such as the beautiful pūlai, āvirai, and erukkam, and ...’

**man(nē)/man(nō)**<sup>21</sup>:

(adverb of manner: 'well')

curi mucci **mulutuman** puraḷa ... pal kuḷai t toṭalai (aka.390:5, 7)  
[**mulutum** 'in its entirety']  
'as the garland with many leaves rolls **well over** (her) curly hair'

(certainty: 'clearly; definitely')

**ituman** pirintōr uḷḷum poḷutē (aiṅk.487:1)  
[**itu** 'this one']  
'**This** is the time when those who are separated think (of their lovers).'

veñcuram **ariya allaman** namakkē ... kuṟumakaḷ koṇṇaṇam celiṇē (aka.335:8-9, 26)  
[**ariya alla** 'they are not difficult']  
'The hot forests are **certainly not difficult** (for me to pass through) if I go taking my young woman with me.'

<sup>21</sup> Two forms, **marričinē** and **maṇum**, which occur in the following contexts, are interesting: **nī marričinē** 'May you thrive for ever' (pura.272:3) and poruḷ tirattu avavu k kai viṭṭal atu **maṇum** poruḷē 'Give up the desire for wealth; that is the wealth/substance which prevails' (kali.14:18-19). They suggest that **man** has the force of a verb meaning 'be established, to prevail, last for ever.' Also it is possible that **maṇra** and **maṇ** are from the same root (**maṇ**) meaning 'to prevail, last for ever.'

In one context, aṭṭu avalam aṇṇu **maṇa** (kali.108:8), **maṇa** is interpreted by a traditional commentator as expressing an adverbial sense 'a great deal.' See Nacciṇārkiṇiyar's commentary on kali.108:8.

(‘however’)

nallār tam kōtaiyāl alaitta puṇ vaṭu k kāṭṭi aṇpu iṇṇi varin ellā pulappēṇ  
yāṇ **enpēṇman** a-n-nilaiyē avan kāṇin kalappēṇ eṇṇum i-k-kaiyaṇu  
neñcē (kali.67:6-9)

[**enpēṇ** ‘I say’ < **en** ‘to say’]

‘My Friend, I say that I shall sulk if he comes without love, showing the scars of the wound (on his body) which his (other) women caused by hitting him with their garlands. **However**, this heart (of mine) without (any) precept says that it would unite (with him) when I see him in that very state.’

(lamentation, expressing grief, reluctance)

ōṭi uytalum **kūṭuman** okkal vāḷkkai taṭkum mā kālē (pura.193:3-4)  
[**kūṭum** ‘is possible’]

‘It is possible even to run away and survive, at the great time when life with kith and kin hinders you.’

(Another interpretation would be to take **man** as giving the sense of a rhetorical question.)

varuvīr ākutaḷ **uraimin** **mannō** ... **cenrōrman** eṇa irukkiṇpōrkkē  
(aka.387:3, 20)

[**uraimin** ‘May you tell’; **cenrōr** ‘he left’]

‘Tell that you will return (soon) to those who would be waiting (patiently) thinking “**He has gone** (in search of wealth).” ’

ivaḷ aṇi vāṭa akanṇu nī ... poruḷ **muyariman** muyalvaḷavai ... vāḷnālum  
nilaiyumō (kali.17:9-12)

[**muyari** ‘you are making an effort’ < **muyal** ‘to make an effort’]

**‘You are making an effort to gather wealth, leaving her whose beauty is wilting (because of your imminent departure). Will the days of (her) life last as long as your effort (lasts)?’**

(possibility; wonder)

**uḷḷi varukuvar kollō uḷaintu yāṇ eḷḷi irukkuvēṇmāṇkolō**  
(kali.142:31-32)

[irukkuvēṇ ‘I will be’]

**‘Will he return, thinking (of me)? Will I be waiting, scorning in agony?’**

**ceṇṇu yām ... pal ūḷ muyaṅkal iyaivatu māṇṇō tōḷi**  
(aka.242:12, 16-17)

[iyaivatu ‘that which is possible’]

**‘Is it possible to go and embrace (him) several times?’**

(‘to prevail’)

**ulakattōrē palarmaṇ celvar** (pati.38:1)

[palar ‘many people’]

**‘Rich people in this world are many.’**

**kallā k kuṇṇaḷa kaṭum pakal vantu emmai illattu vā eṇa mey koḷḷi ellā**  
**niṇ peṇṭir uḷarmāṇṇō kūṇu** (kali.94:14-16)

[uḷ ‘to exist’]

**‘You, immature dwarf! In midday you come and grab my body saying “Come to my house.” Tell me, are there your (own) women, really?’**



(reference to an earlier state)<sup>22</sup>

akaṇ kaṇ vaippin **nāṭuman** ... kuṭṭuvaṇ ... tānai paravā ūnkē  
(*pati.29:10, 14-15*)

[**nāṭu** ‘country’]

‘**They were** vast bountiful **countries**, before (the Cēra king) Kuṭṭu-  
vaṇ’s army spread (there).’

vel vēl aṇṇal kāṇā ūnkē ninṇiṇum **pulliyēm mannē** (*pura.141:7-8*)  
[**pulliyēm** ‘we are poor’]

‘**We were poorer** than you before we met the noble one with a  
victorious spear.’

yāṇum ... maṭa nallālai īṇra naṭpīrku arulāṇ āyiṇum in nakai muṇval  
ēlaiyai p paṇṇāl kūntal vāri nucuppu ivarntu ōmpiya nalam puṇai  
**utaviyum uṭaiyan mannē** (*aka.195:5-10*)

[**utavi** ‘help’; **uṭai** ‘to have’]

‘Even if he is not kind (enough) for a friendship with me who gave  
birth to the good young woman (he loves), (he must understand  
that) **I helped** for that sweet smiling poor girl’s wellbeing by combing  
her hair many days and protecting her by carrying her on my  
waist.’

peru vaḷam paḷuni **naṭṭanai mannō** munṇe ... paṇampē  
(*pura.113:3-4, 7*)

[**naṭṭanai** ‘you befriended’ < **naḷ** ‘to befriend’]

‘O Paṇampu hill, great bounty having ripened (in your lands), **you**  
**befriended** (many people) in the past.’

<sup>22</sup> It has the overtones of lamentation, sympathy, and pity. The earlier state is described by a word/phrase in a separate clause.

**maṇra:**

(certainty)

**puraiya maṇra** puraiyōr kēṇmai (*narr.1:5*)  
 [purai 'to be noble']  
 'Friendship with noble people is **certainly noble.**'

vēlaṇ vēṇṭa veṇi maṇai vantōy kaṭavuḷ āyiṇum āka maṭavai **maṇra**  
 ... murukē (*narr.34:9-11*)  
 'Murukaṇ, you who came to the place of the frenzied dance at the  
 request of (your priest) Vēlaṇ, **are certainly gullible.**'  
 (It also has an overtone of pity.)

(expressing grief/pity; sympathy; self pity)

**citaintatu maṇra** nī civantaṇai nōkkaliṇ ... nal nāṭṭu ... kaviṇē  
(*pati.27:1, 15-16*)  
 [citai 'to be destroyed']  
 'The beauty of the (enemy's) good country **is destroyed** (now)  
 since you look at it angrily.'

**alkal vantōṇ maṇra** kuṇṇa nāṭaṇ (*narr.114:5-6*)  
 [var 'to come']  
 'The Nāṭaṇ from the mountainous country **came at night.**'

kuyil ... ālum ... kālaiyum **akanrōr maṇra** nam maṇanticiṇōr  
(*narr.118:3-5*)  
 [akal 'to go away, depart']  
 'He who has forgotten us **is away** from us even at the time when  
 the cuckoo sings.'

(sarcasm)

nallārai k kāṇiṇ vilakki nayantu avar pal itaḷ uṇ kaṇṇum tōḷum pukal  
pāṭa nallatu **kaṛpittār maṇra** (kali.112:8-10)

[**kaṛpi** ‘to make learn’ < **kal** ‘to learn’]

‘Well, **they** (also) **taught** (you) something good: to stop good women if you see them and to sing praises of their petal-like ensnaring eyes and shoulders.’

**mā**: See also “**kamā**” in “The Imperative/Optative.”

(adverbial)

**paṇmā** nāṭu keṭa (pati.83:6)

[**paṇ** < **pal(a)** ‘many’]

‘so that the (enemy) countries perish **in many ways**’

niṇ ... vāy pōl poymmoḷi evvam eṇ **kaḷaimā** (aka.3:13-14)

[**kaḷai** ‘to cure, get rid of’]

‘**In what way** would your false words, which are like truth, remove my distress?’

(expletive)

ōṭi uytalum kūṭumaṇ okkal vāḷkkai **taṭkumā kālē** (puṛa.193:3-4)

[**taḷ** ‘to hinder’; **kāl** ‘time’]

‘It is possible to run away and survive, **at the great time** when life with kith and kin **hinders** you.’

(It can also be understood as a rhetorical question.)

(optative; wish)

naṇṇāḷ vēṅkaiyum malarkamā iṇi (narr.206:7)

[malar 'to bloom']

'Now, **may** the vēṅkai also **bloom** for the good day (of your wedding).'

**mātu/mātō:**

(certainty)

pala tiṛam peyarpavai kēṭkuvir mātō (malai:291)

[kē] 'to hear']

'You will **definitely hear** (the noise made by) the animals which move around in different ways (on the mountain).'

mū-v-ēḷ ulakamum oru niḷal ākkiya ēmattai mātō (pari.3:75-76)

[ēmattai 'you have the protection' < ēmam 'protection, security']

'You **certainly are the one who protected** all the twentyone worlds by making them (come) under one shade.'

(lamentation; expressing grief, reluctance)

eḷil aḷiya vāṭum nāḷum ninaival mātu avar paṇpu eṇṇu ōvātu inaiyal

... tōḷi

(aka.171:3-5)

[ninaival 'to think']

'My friend, do not pine incessantly saying, "**I think** of his qualities even when my beauty is damaged and I am withering." '

ivai kāṇ tōṛum nōvar mātō aḷiyarō aḷiyar eṇ āyattōr (narr.12:7-8)

[nōvar 'they will suffer' < no 'to suffer']

'Pitiful are my companions. Whenever they look at these (things of mine), **they will be distressed.**'

aññai pōla iñiya kūṛiyum kaḷvar pōla k **koṭṭiyaṇ mātō** ... malaikiḷavōṇē  
(*narr.28:3-4, 9*)

[**koṭu** 'to be bent, crooked']

'The mountain Chief is a cruel man like the thieves, although he says sweet things like a mother.'

tīyūm vaḷiyūm vicumpu payantāṅku **nōyūm iṇpamum ākinru mātō**  
... nāṭaṇ malarnta mārpe (*narr.294:1-2, 9*)

[**nōy** 'sickness'; **iṇpam** 'pleasure'; **ā** 'to be']

'O well, the wide chest of the man from the country side is becoming a pain and pleasure like the sky emitting fire and air (at the same time).'

(sarcasm; reluctance)

**maṇappan mātō** niṇ viṇal takaimaiyē (*narr.270:11*)

[**maṇa** 'to forget']

'I will forget your triumphant qualities.'

**māḷa**: It occurs only with the second person verb forms.

(wish)

arivai kāṇiya oru nāl **pūṇka māḷa** niṇ purai neṭum tēr (*pati.81:31-32*)

[**pūṇ** 'to wear, be decorated']

'May your excellent tall chariot be decorated some day so that the young woman could see it.'

vārār eṇṇum pulavi uṭkoḷal **olika māḷa** niṇ neṇcattāṇē (*narr.11:4-5*)

[**oli** 'to disappear; expel, remove']

'Expel/Remove from your heart the sulking that he (your lover) has not come.'

**yāla:** It is used only in the second person.

(address)

ponnum maṇiyum pōlum yāla niṇ nanṇar mēṇiyum nāru irum  
katuppum (narr.166:1-2)  
'your lovely body and good-smelling dark hair (which are) like gold  
and gems'

colluṇ col etir kollāy yāla niṇ tirumukam iraiñci nāṇuti (narr.39:1-2)  
[iraiñcu 'to bow, hang'; nāṇuti 'you are bashful' < nāṇ(u) 'to feel  
bashful']

'You do not accept (my) words if I talk. You are hanging your  
lovely face and feeling bashful.'

(adverbial meaning 'well')

varuttam tīra yāla niṇ nala meṇ paṇaittōl eytinam (narr.9:3-4)  
[eytu 'to reach, obtain']  
'I obtained your lovely soft firm shoulders so well that my grief is  
ended.'

(In this context, yāla might simply be an address form like *ila*  
which occurs in *aka.12:3*. One can compare a similar form, *ēlē*  
'hey', used in some dialects of modern Tamil.)

## ADJECTIVES OR NOUN MODIFIERS<sup>1</sup>

GENERAL: Adjectives tell us something about a latent or intrinsic quality of the nouns they qualify.<sup>2</sup> The function of the adjective is to bring out some potential quality of the noun it qualifies. The Tamil adjective

---

<sup>1</sup> The traditional name for an “adjective” is **peyaraṭai** ‘that which is adjacent to a noun’ or, simply, “modifiers.”

<sup>2</sup> Transient/acquired qualities of a noun can also be expressed by adjectival constructions, e.g., **cērkinra** kaṇ kaviṇ, literally ‘the beauty of (the process of) uniting that attracts the eye’ (*pari.22:35*). This type of “adjectives” contain a non-past/non-completive marker or a past/completive marker that is added to the stem. Some scholars hold that forms like **cērkinra** are not adjectives. For different views, see Velupillai (pp.815-817). Constructions like **cērkinra** are treated in this study in the chapters which deal with adjectival participles.

Forms like **aḷakāna** ‘beautiful’ and **aḷakāy irukkira** ‘that which is beautiful’ which are derived by adding **āna** ‘that which is full of’ to nouns or **irukkira** ‘that which is/remains’ to an adverb ending with **āy** (< **ā** ‘to be’) are considered as “adjectives” in modern Tamil (cf. Arden:193). They are not attested in classical Tamil. For information on forms similar to **āna** (**ānān**, **ānāl**, etc.), see “A Note On The Verb **ān**.”

always precedes the noun it qualifies and has to change its form into a noun if it has to follow the noun. It is semantically completed by a nominal in the sense that it makes complete sense only when interpreted along with the nominal it qualifies. The qualities expressed by the adjectives are not only binary but also spectral: antiquity, innateness, badness, brightness, color, darkness, depth, deixis, directionality, freshness, goodness, number, pleasantness, purity, rarity, shape, size, substantiality, subtlety, and the like. One could make further categories like “color adjectives,” “demonstrative adjectives,” etc.<sup>3</sup>

This study makes a formal distinction between the adjective, adjectival participle, and nominal compound in the following way: an adjective is a stem without a past/completive marker, non-past/non-completive marker, or a negative marker, and modifies a nominal; an adjectival participle is like an adjective in terms of its function, except that it contains a past/completive marker, non-past/non-completive marker, or a negative marker; a nominal compound contains an adjective/adjectival participle and a nominal. This chapter deals with adjectives which some modern scholars refer to as “mono-morphemic adjectives” — i.e., those which cannot be analyzed into smaller morphemes.<sup>4</sup> See also “Nominal Compounds” in this study.

**FORMATION:** There are some nominal stems which precede and qualify nouns, which qualify as “adjectives.” In addition, most verb stems function as “adjectives” when they precede a noun. For example, **kol kaḷiru**, which has the structure verb stem **kol** ‘to kill’ + **kaḷiru** ‘male elephant’, can be understood as ‘killer elephant.’<sup>5</sup> There are some adjectives

---

<sup>3</sup> Only a random sample of classical Tamil adjectives is provided here.

<sup>4</sup> For a classification of these adjectives, see Murugarathanam (pp.394-400).

<sup>5</sup> Traditional grammarians would categorize **kol kaḷiru** as a **viṇaittokai** “compound denoting an action,” or even describe it as **kālam karanta peyar eccam** “nominal participle without any markers of time” (Naṇṇūl, Rule 364). In this study, forms like **kol**



tives which seem to be derived forms, resembling adjectival/relative participles. That is, there are “adjectives” like **periya kaḷ** ‘large (amount of) toddy’ (*pura.235:2*) derived from \***per(u)** ‘to be big/large’ + **i** + **y** (glide) + **a**. In such forms the so-called “past marker” **i** does not really denote a past time, but only signifies the “completive aspect” or the “totality of the quality” signified by the stem. One might be tempted to suggest that forms like **periya** are corrupted forms of **perukiya** (**peruku** ‘to increase’ + **i** + **y** [glide] + **a**) and the like. Nevertheless, even in “adjectives” like **uyarnta** ‘tall’ or in **perutta** ‘large, be abundant’, the so-called “past markers” **nt** and **tt** do not signify a true past time, but only the totality of the quality signified by the stem.

There are “adjectives” like **val** ‘strong, capable’ and **kēḷ** ‘colorful’, from which other verb forms are derived in classical Tamil: e.g., colla **vallirrum ilaṇ** ‘neither was he capable of expressing himself’ (*aka.32:15*) **vs.** **val vil** ‘strong bow’ (*kali.7:6*); **yāḷicai kēḷtanna** ... **miṇṇiṟu ārppa** ‘honey bees sounding as if music emerged from the harp’ (*pari.8:22*) **vs.** **irum kēḷ** **vaya-p-puli** ‘dark colored strong tiger’ (*narr.217:3*); **tuṇ arūum takaiya kātu** ‘forest difficult to be approached’ (*kali.11:15*), **arūum** < \***ar(u)** ‘to be difficult.’

Examples like **periya**, **perutta**, **val**, **kēḷ**, and **aru** suggest that all adjectives may be derived from verb stems. The fact that case markers are never added to the adjectives strengthen this view. Neither person-number-gender distinction, nor a distinction between affirmative and negative is made by an adjective. An adjective does not vary in form according to the person, number, gender, and case of the noun it modifies. An adjectival noun can be derived from it. See “Adjectival Nouns or Appellative Nouns” for information on adjectival/appellative nouns, and the chapters on adjectival participles for the derivation of adjectival/relative participles. There are no

---

**kaḷiṟu** are considered to be of the structure: verb stem + noun; the stem **kol** is taken to function as an “adjective.”

comparative or superlative degrees of adjectives. For information on comparison, see "Comparison."

### The Oblique Stem of an Adjective

The oblique stem of an adjective is obtained in one or a combination of the following ways: by lengthening the short vowel in the first syllable of the stem; by doubling the penultimate consonant in the stem; by adding to the stem a nasal homorganic with the initial **k**, **c**, **t**, or **p** of the following item; by adding **v** to certain stems; by changing the stem-final consonant; or by deleting the stem-final **u**. These changes are controlled by the shape of the stem. See "Morphophonemics" for examples of these changes.

### EXAMPLES OF OBLIQUE STEMS OF ADJECTIVES

viṛaliyar ... nal meṇ **cīraṭi** (cīru:31-32)

[**cīraṭi** < **cīru** 'small' + **aṭi** 'feet']

'good, soft, and **small** feet of the (female) singers'

(Note that the short vowel in the first syllable of **cīru** is lengthened and the stem-final **u** is deleted.)

taṭantāḷ nārai (narr.91:4)

[**taṭantāḷ** < **taṭa** 'bent, crooked' + **n** + **tāḷ** 'leg'; **nārai** 'crane']

'crane with **bent** legs'

(Here, a nasal [**n**] homorganic with the initial consonant [**t**] of the noun following the stem is inserted between the stem and the following noun.)

**cevvari k kayaloṭu paccirā p piṛaḷum mai irum kuṭṭattu**

(*peru:270-271*)

[**cevvari** < **ce** ‘red’ + **v** + **vari** ‘stripes, lines’;

**paccirā** < **pacu** ‘fresh, wet, young’; **iṛā** ‘prawn, shrimp’]

‘in the large, deep, dark pond where **wet shrimps** and **red-striped** carps wallow’

(Note that in **cevvari** the consonant **v** is added to the stem in accordance with the initial consonant **v** of the following noun **vari**. Also note that the penultimate consonant **c** in **pacu** is doubled/hardened to produce the oblique stem **pacc** while deleting the stem-final **u**.)

### EXAMPLES OF ADJECTIVES

#### Antiquity/Innateness/Customary:

**tol** ‘ancient, established, acknowledged’: **tol kuṭi** ‘established clan’

(*tiru:178*)

**tol** ‘innate’: **tol kaviṇ** ‘inherent beauty’

(*kali.2:28*)

**tol** ‘customary’: **tol paci** ‘usual hunger’

(*peru:253*)

#### Bad Quality/Cruelty<sup>6</sup>:

**tī** ‘cruel’: **tī neṇcattu** ‘with **cruel** heart’

(*pari.5:73*)

#### Brightness/Obviousness/Clarity:

**oḷ** ‘bright’: **oḷ eri** ‘**bright** flame’

(*pura.240:10*)

**oḷ** ‘obvious’: **oḷ icai** ‘well-known/acknowledged reputation’

(*pati.pati.8:10*)

**oṇ** ‘bright’: **oṇ katir** ‘**bright** rays’

(*kali.2:5*)

---

<sup>6</sup> Also, **tīya** ‘bad’: **tīya kaluḷi** ‘**bad** frothy water’ (*kuṛu.327:4*). Note that **tīya** contains the suffix **a**.

## Color:

<b>karu(m)</b> ‘black’: <b>karum</b> pukai ‘ <b>black</b> smoke’	( <i>ciru</i> :156)
<b>ce(m)</b> ‘red’: <b>cem</b> paral ‘ <b>red</b> pebbles’	( <i>aka</i> .133:3)
<b>nīl</b> ‘blue’: <b>nīl</b> nīra vicumpu ‘ <b>blue</b> sky’	( <i>tiru</i> :116)
<b>paccai</b> ‘green’: <b>paccai</b> k kuḷalai p pacuntaṇṭu ‘fresh <b>green</b> stem of the kuḷalai’	( <i>pari</i> .11:101-102)
<b>veḷ</b> ‘white’: <b>veḷ</b> aruvi ‘ <b>white</b> waterfall’	( <i>ciru</i> :90)
<b>veṇ</b> kuruku ‘ <b>white</b> crane’	( <i>narr</i> .4:11)

## Darkness:

<b>iru(m)</b> ‘dark, black’: <b>irum</b> katuppu ‘ <b>dark</b> hair’	( <i>narr</i> .387:1)
<b>irum</b> kuyil ‘ <b>black</b> cuckoo’	( <i>narr</i> .118:3)

## Depth:

<b>āl</b> ‘deep’: <b>āl</b> tuyaram ‘deep/intense grief’	( <i>kali</i> .147:68)
--	------------------------

## Deixis:

<b>a</b> ‘that’: <b>a-k-kā</b> ‘ <b>that</b> grove’	( <i>kali</i> .92:28)
<b>i</b> ‘this’: <b>i-k-karai</b> ‘ <b>this</b> end/edge/bank’	( <i>puṛa</i> .357:9)
<b>u</b> ‘yonder’: <b>u-k-karai</b> ‘The <b>yonder</b> end/edge/bank’ <sup>7</sup>	( <i>puṛa</i> .357:9)

Directionality, Lateralness/Limitation<sup>8</sup>:

<b>iṭa</b> ‘left’: <b>iṭa</b> vayiṇ ‘on the <b>left</b> side’	( <i>ciru</i> :35)
<b>kuṭa</b> ‘western’: <b>kuṭa</b> pulam ‘ <b>west</b> land’	( <i>ciru</i> :47)
<b>kuṇa</b> ‘eastern’: <b>kuṇa</b> ticai ‘ <b>eastern</b> direction’	( <i>puṛa</i> .386:20)
<b>ten</b> ‘southern’: <b>ten</b> ticai ‘ <b>southern</b> direction’	( <i>pari</i> .10:121)
<b>naṭu</b> ‘middle, inside’: <b>kēḷiyuḷ naṭu</b> ‘ <b>center</b> of the Vedas’	

<sup>7</sup> **ukkarai** is interpreted as ‘that bank/edge’ by a traditional commentator: cf. U.V. Saminathier’s commentary.

<sup>8</sup> See “Case Markers and Postpositions” for examples like **kaṭai** ‘end’, **mutal** ‘beginning’, etc.

**naṭu** ‘middle, center’: **yāṛru naṭu** ‘center of the river’ (*pari.2:25*)  
**vaṭa** ‘northern’: **vaṭa malai** ‘northern mountain’ (*paṭṭ:187*)  
**vala(m)** ‘right’: **valam puri vaḷai** ‘right spiralled conch’ (*neṭu:142*)

Freshness, Newness:

**pacu(m)** ‘fresh’: **pacum puṇ** ‘fresh wound’ (*pati.61:1*)  
**putu** ‘new, unknown’: **putu nāṇ** ‘new/unknown bashfulness’  
(*aka.112:19*)

Goodness, Loveliness:

**nal** ‘good’: **nal īkai** ‘good beneficence’ (*narr.91:9*)  
**nal** ‘lovely’: **nal tōḷ** ‘lovely shoulders/arms’ (*narr.131:9*)

Loftiness/Lowliness<sup>9</sup>:

**īḷi** ‘lowly’: **īḷi piṛappāḷaṇ** ‘he of a lowly birth’ (*pura.170:5*)

Novelty, Strangeness:

**vampu** ‘novel, odd, strange’: **vampa mākkal** ‘strange/new people’  
(*narr.164:7*)

Number, Count<sup>10</sup>:

**mu** ‘three’: **mukkaṇṇāṇ** ‘He, with three eyes; Śiva’ (*kali.2:4*)  
**mū eyil** ‘three fortresses’ (*kali.2:4*)

<sup>9</sup> Cf. **uyarnta** ‘lofty/highly principled’: **uyarnta utavi** ‘noble help’ (*matu:743*). In most contexts, **uyarnta** signifies “loftiness” or “high principled-ness.” **ilinta** ‘descended’: **ilinta mīṇ** ‘fish which came down (the shore)’ (*kali.121:20*). The context is: **eri tirai tantu iṭa ilinta mīṇ** ‘the fish which came down the shore as the tossing waves brought and dropped them.’ In most contexts, **ilinta** signifies movement in a lower direction.

<sup>10</sup> For other numerals, see “Numerals.”

## Old Quality, Customary Quality:

**paḷa(m)** 'old': **paḷaṇ** kayiṛu 'old rope' (*narr.284:10*)

**paḷa(m)** 'accustomed': **paḷam** paci 'accustomed hunger' (*peru:25*)

## Pleasantness, Preciousness, Cruelty, Unpleasantness:

**in** 'pleasant': **in** kālai 'pleasant morning' (*narr.264:2*)

**in** 'precious, dear': **in** uyir 'dear/precious life' (*matu:403*)

**koṭu(m)** 'cruel, unpleasant': **koṭum** col 'unpleasant words' (*narr.200:11*)

## Purity:

**tū** 'pure/naive': **tūu** neṇcam 'pure/naive heart/mind' (*kuṛu.157:2*)

**tū** 'clean': **tū** uṭai 'clean clothes' (*tiru:138*)

## Shape, Measure:

**akal** 'wide': **akal** māṛpu 'wide chest' (*puṛa.255:2*)

**iru(m)** 'vast': **irum** kaṭal 'vast sea' (*matu:407*)

**iru(m)** 'large': **irum** kiḷai 'large/big extended clan' (*puṛa.173:9*)

**iru(m)** 'dense, deep': **irum** kaṭaṛu 'dense forest' (*puṛa.140:7*)

**uyar** 'high/tall': **uyar** karai 'high bank/shore'<sup>11</sup> (*narr.91:2*)

**kuṛu(m)** 'short': **kuṛum** tāḷ ēṇṇai 'the male pig with short legs' (*puṛa.379:8*)

**koṭu** 'bent/crooked': **koṭu** naṭai 'crooked gait' (*peru:243*)

**koṭu** 'bent': **koṭu** veṇ tiṅkaḷ 'bent, white moon; crescent moon' (*aka.86:6*)

**ciṛu** 'little': **ciṛu** varai 'a little while' (*aka.136:22*)

**nīḷ** 'long': **nīḷ** curam 'long (stretched) forest' (*kali.145:14*)

**nīḷ** 'tall': **nīḷ** kuṭai 'tall parasol' (*puṛa.24:23*)

**neṭu** 'long': **neṭu** neri 'long route/path' (*peru:65*)

<sup>11</sup> Compare **uyarnta** 'high/tall': **uyarnta** nel 'tall rice paddy' (*puṛa.391:3*).

<b>neṭu</b> 'tall': <b>neṭu</b> nilai 'tall entrance'	( <i>matu</i> :353)
<b>nēr</b> 'straight': <b>nēr</b> karai 'straight border' <sup>12</sup>	( <i>pura</i> .392:14)
<b>pakaṭu</b> 'big, wide': <b>pakaṭṭilai</b> 'large, wide leaf'	( <i>pura</i> .392:13)
<b>vaṭṭa</b> 'round': <b>vaṭṭa</b> k kaḷaṅku 'round jacks'	( <i>aka</i> .241:14)
<b>vaḷai</b> 'bend': <b>vaḷai</b> talai 'head that is bending'	( <i>pati</i> .13:6)
<b>viyal</b> 'wide, vast': <b>viyal</b> vāṇam 'wide sky'	( <i>pari</i> .19:83)

## Size:

<b>ciṟu</b> 'small': <b>ciṟu</b> mīṇ 'small fish'	( <i>peru</i> .303)
<b>peru(m)</b> 'big': <b>perum</b> kal 'big rock'	( <i>pura</i> .19:6)

## Strength:

<b>tiṇ</b> 'strong, substantial': <b>tiṇ</b> cuvar 'strong wall'	( <i>matu</i> :667)
--	---------------------

## Subtlety:

<b>nuṇ</b> 'fine, subtle': <b>nuṇ</b> eḷil 'fine beauty'	( <i>kali</i> .4:17)
<b>no(y)</b> 'fine': <b>noy-n-nūl</b> 'fine thread'	( <i>pari</i> .10:10)

## Tenderness, Youth, Maturity, Old Quality:

<b>iḷa(m)</b> 'young, tender, soft': <b>iḷam</b> kaḷiṟu 'young male elephant'	( <i>kuru</i> .346:1)
<b>mutir</b> 'mature': <b>mutir</b> naṟavu 'mature nectar'	( <i>aka</i> .213:7)
<b>mutu</b> kaḷ 'mature toddy'	( <i>pura</i> .258:9)
<b>mutu</b> 'old': <b>mutu</b> cuvar 'old wall'	( <i>ciṟu</i> :133)

---

<sup>12</sup> Most contexts in which **nēr** occurs suggest that the term signifies 'agreeability, perfection.'

## NUMERALS

GENERAL: Numerals are used to count items. “Nothingness” is the beginning unit measure found in classical Tamil. Names of numerals are available in this period for “nothing,”  $1/4$ ,  $1/2$ , 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and some beyond 10. Words for all the numbers are not available in the poems, so the statements made here are based on attested numerals. Most of the cited numerals are cardinal. Only one literary context (*pura.109:3-7*) which is given below indicates that there was a system of deriving ordinal numerals, but even this context is vague enough to give rise to different interpretations. The actual count for some of the attested numerals is unclear. These numerals indicate an “indefinitely large” amount. For example, the term **nūru**, which is normally interpreted as “a hundred,” sometimes signified more than 100 items: **nūrruvar** ‘The Hundred People’ (*kali.52:2*) vs. **nūrriṭaḷ** t tamarai-p-pū ‘lotus flower with **nūru** petals’ (*aink.20:2*). Similarly, the term **āyiram** which is normally understood as referring to one thousand items, in fact, signified an indefinitely large number of items: **āyiram** katir nāyiru ‘the sun with **āyiram** rays’ (*pari.3:22*). All the numerals above  $1/2$  have two forms, one oblique or “adjectival,”



one nominal. In this study, the oblique or “adjectival” forms of numerals are referred to as their “oblique stems.”

**FORMATION:** The fractions have separate indivisible names. The names for other numerals are derived forms. Except for 0, 1/4, 1/2, 4, 6, and 7, names of the numerals below 100 and are not multiples of ten have the suffix **tu** added to their respective roots or stems. These name are given below. Larger numerals are formed by adding the noun form of the last digit to the oblique stem(s) of the preceding digit(s). In doing so, 1, 10, 100, 1,000, 10,000, etc., seem to be the “count” signified by the successive digits which are reckoned from right to left. If there are more than three items involved, the structure is: root/oblique + oblique + noun.

However, there seems to be more than one way of deriving the large numerals. For example, **patinorumūvar** ‘33 persons’ (*tiru:167*) is derived from **patin** oblique of **patu** + **oru** oblique of **onru** + **mūvar**. While **patinorumūvar** is construed as “eleven times 3,” **nārpatttonpatu** (< **nāl** root + **patt** oblique of **patu** + **onpatu**) ‘49’ (*pura.201:11*) is understood as “four times ten plus nine.” In another context, ‘18’ is expressed as **onpatirru iratti** ‘doubled nine’ (*tiru:168*). Since a complete set of numerals is not available, it is difficult to deduce the system of numeral derivation in classical Tamil and one has to be content with the examples.

See “Pronouns” for numerical pronouns derived from the numerals.

## EXAMPLES OF CARDINAL NUMERALS

Fractions and cardinal numerals from 0 up to 10:

count	word	oblique stem
0	<b>pāl</b> ‘nothingness’	(not attested)
1/4	<b>kāl</b> ( <i>pari.3:77</i> )	(not attested)
1/2	<b>pāku</b> ( <i>pari.3:77</i> )	(not attested)

1	<b>onru</b> ( <i>pari.3:77</i> )	<b>oru</b> ( <i>pura.121:1</i> ) <b>ōr</b> ( <i>kuṛu.277:3</i> )
2	<b>iraṇṭu</b> ( <i>pari.3:78</i> )	<b>iru</b> ( <i>pari.3:75</i> ) <b>īr</b> ( <i>pura.2:15</i> )
3	<b>mūnru</b> ( <i>pari.3:78</i> )	<b>mū</b> ( <i>pari.3:75</i> )
4	<b>nālku</b> ( <i>peru.489</i> )	<b>nāl</b> ( <i>pari.3:80</i> )
4	<b>nāṇku</b> ( <i>pari.3:78</i> )	<b>nāṇ</b> ( <i>aka.181:16</i> )
5	<b>aintu</b> ( <i>pari.3:78</i> )	<b>ai</b> ( <i>aka.48:17</i> )
6	<b>āru</b> ( <i>pari.3:79</i> )	<b>aṛu</b> ( <i>naṛṛ.202:9</i> )
7	<b>ēl</b> ( <i>pari.3:79</i> )	<b>ēl</b> ( <i>pari.3:75</i> ) <b>elu</b> ( <i>ciṛu.113</i> )
8	<b>eṭṭu</b> ( <i>pari.3:79</i> )	<b>eṇ</b> ( <i>pura.87:3</i> )
9	<b>onpatu</b> ( <i>aka.125:20</i> )	<b>onpatirru</b> ( <i>tiru.168</i> ) <b>onpatin</b> ( <i>pati.pati.5:19</i> )
9	<b>tonṭu</b> ( <i>pari.3:79</i> )	
10	<b>pattu</b> ( <i>pura.18:5</i> )	<b>patt ...</b> ( <i>kali.136:6</i> ) <b>patirru</b> ( <i>pari.3:40</i> ) <b>patin</b> ( <i>tiru.167</i> ) <b>pan</b> ( <i>tiru.118</i> )

Cardinal numerals beyond ten:

count	word	oblique stem
?	<b>āmpal</b> ( <i>pari.2:13</i> ) (basically, <b>āmpal</b> is the name of a kind of water lily)	
1,000?	<b>āyiram</b> ( <i>pari.3:41</i> )	<b>āyira</b> ‘thousand and ...?’ ( <i>pati.63:20</i> )
?	<b>ūli</b> ( <i>pati.63:20</i> )	

?	<b>kamalam</b> ( <i>pari.2:14</i> ) ( <b>kamalam</b> , also lotus flower)	
?	<b>kuvaḷai</b> ( <i>pari.2:13</i> ) (basically, <b>kuvaḷai</b> is the name of a flower)	
?	<b>kōṭi</b> ( <i>pura.18:5</i> ) (literally means 'the end/last')	
?	<b>caṅkam</b> ( <i>pari.2:13</i> ) (basically refers to a conch or shell)	
100	<b>nūru</b> ( <i>pura.184:3</i> ) <b>nūr<u>r</u>u</b> ( <i>pari.3:40</i> ) (as a verb it means 'to powder' <i>pati.66:5</i> )	
100,000?	<b>nūrāyiram</b> ( <i>pari.3:43</i> )	
?	<b>neytal</b> ( <i>pari.2:13</i> ) (basically, <b>neytal</b> is the name of a kind of water lily)	
10,000?	<b>patināyiram</b> ( <i>pari.3:42</i> )	
multitude	<b>maṇpatu</b> ( <i>pari.3:9</i> )	
?	<b>veḷlam</b> ( <i>pari.2:14</i> ) (basically, <b>veḷlam</b> refers to the flood)	<b>veḷla</b> ( <i>pati.63:20</i> )

## ORDINAL NUMERALS

The terms for the 'first', 'middle/next', and the 'last' are **mutal**, **iṭai**, and **kaṭai** respectively (*pari.3:71*). No conclusive method of deriving the ordinal numerals could be found, because there are only a very few contexts where items are treated serially. When items are reckoned by adding the suffix **ē** to the cardinal numeral, the resulting words appear as ordinal numerals:

pāriyatu paṇampē ... nāṇku payaṇ uṭaittē  
 ‘The Chieftain Pāri’s Paṇampu hill has four (types of) produce.’  
**onrē** ciṇṇilai vetiriṇ nel viḷaiyummē  
 ‘First, grain grows inside the vetir-bamboo.’  
**iraṇṭē** tīṇcuḷai p palaviṇ paḷam ūḷkummē  
 ‘Second, sweet jack fruits ripen (there).’  
**mūnrē** koḷuṇkoṭi vaḷḷi k kiḷaṇku vīḷkummē  
 ‘Third, the lush vaḷḷi-tuber grows (there).’  
**nāṇkē** ... tiṇi neṭum kuṇṇam tēṇ coriyummē  
 ‘Fourth, ... honey flows down the tall dense hill.’  
 (pura.109:3-7)

Here, **onrē**, **iraṇṭē**, **mūnrē**, and **nāṇkē** have been interpreted by traditional commentators as ordinal numerals: ‘first’, ‘second’, ‘third’, and ‘fourth.’ Note that the order ‘first’, ‘second’, etc. presented in this literary context does not reflect a priority sequence.

## COLLECTIVES AND UNIVERSALS

**GENERAL:** In classical Tamil, some forms, which are to be treated as nominals, provide a sense of “totality” to nouns or “universality” to an action. There are two types: the “collective” type referring to groups of entities denoted by nouns, and the “universal” type signifying repetitive occurrence or open-endedness of an action.<sup>1</sup> The “collective” type is similar to the significance of “all and every,” whereas the “universal” type is similar to “any” or “every” in English. The negative type of these forms gives the sense “none,” “nothing,” “nowhere,” etc.

**FORMATION:** The notions of totality and universality are expressed by periphrasis. All these constructions are completed by (u)m, which provides a “completive” or an “inclusive” sense.

In the “collective” type, there are two structural possibilities: one is to place a quantifier to the left of the noun and to follow the noun with **um**

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lindholm and Paramasivam (1980, Volume II:78, 90) for a similar usage in modern Tamil.

resulting in the structure: quantifier + noun + **um**<sup>2</sup>; another is to have the structure: noun + quantifier + **um**. The quantifier is a nominal, like a noun or numeral.

The quantifiers **ellā** 'all', **ellīr**, **ellār**, and **ellōr** which are completed by (u)**m** resulting in the forms **ellām** 'everything', **ellīrum** 'everyone (second person)', **ellārum** 'everyone (third person)', and **ellōrum** 'everyone (third person)' do not have to have a noun preceding them.

When the quantifier precedes and the suffix **um** follows the noun, the noun is to be understood as plural although there is no overt plural marker added to it. When the quantifier and the suffix **um** follow the noun, the latter is singular as a group or is to be understood as a collective entity.

The universal type expressing a repetitive occurrence of an action is formed by adding **um** to a nominal referring to a time unit. It precedes the action it modifies. In the universal type signifying open-endedness of an action, there are the following possibilities: one is to place an interrogative word to the left of the noun/verb and to follow the noun/verb with **um** resulting in the structure interrogative word + noun/verb + **um**; another is to have the structure: interrogative word + **um** + noun/verb.

The negative meaning of the collectives and the universals, used for open-ended exclusion, is expressed by completing the clause in which they occur by a negative verb. The numeral **onru** 'one thing' and the numeral personal pronouns **oruvan** 'one man (non-honorific)', **orubar** 'one person (honorific)' are also used in a similar way as are the interrogative words to express the negative meaning of the universals. The only difference is that the main verb in the same clause as **onrum**, **oruvanum**, or **orubarum**

---

<sup>2</sup> Here, one might recall the linguistic terminology "discontinuous morpheme." For the use of a numeral signifying a collective set of items, see the examples of **um** presented in "The Particles."

is always negative, while the main verb in the same clause as an interrogative word (e.g., **yārum**) may be positive or negative.

In all the above situations, should there be a case marker or a postposition, it precedes the suffix **um**.

## EXAMPLES

Collectives:

### *Structure and Example*

**anaittum:**

(quantifier **anaittu** + **um**)

tīyīṇuḷ teṛaḷ nī pūviṇuḷ nārṛam nī ... **anaittum** nī **anaittin** uṭporuḷum nī  
(*pari.3:63-68*)

[**anaittu** 'that which is of that nature; something of that nature']

'You are the destruction in the fire. You are the fragrance in the flowers. You are **everything (of that nature)**. You are the inner substance of everything (of that nature).'

**anaittu \_\_ um:**

(quantifier **anaittu** + noun + **um**)

tīyīṇuḷ teṛaḷ nī pūviṇuḷ nārṛam nī ... **anaittum** nī **anaittin** **uṭporuḷum**  
nī (pari.3:63-68)

[**anaittin** oblique of **anaittu**; **uṭporuḷ** 'inner substance']

'You are the destruction in the fire. You are the fragrance in the flowers. You are everything (of that nature). You are **the inner substance of everything (of that nature)**.'

**iraṇṭum:**(demonstrative adjective + numeral **iraṇṭu + um**)

pōrēṇṇu aruntalai añcalum āycciyar kārikai t tōḷ kāmuraṭalum iv  
**iraṇṭum** ōrāṅku c cēṇal ilavō (kali.106:40-42)

[iv 'these'; **iraṇṭu** 'two']

'Don't **both of these**, (namely) fearing the difficult head of the fighting bull and desiring the dark beautiful shoulders of the shepherdess, (ever) combine together?'

**ellām:**(quantifier **ellā + um**)

ēe teḷintēm yām kāyāti **ellām** val ellā ... varuntal niṇ vañcam  
 uraittu (kali.89:7, 9)

'Hey, hey! You, who are capable of **everything**, do not grieve about your deceit. We are sure (of your deceit).'

(Note that the quantifier **ellām** is not preceded by a noun.)<sup>3</sup>

(noun + quantifier **ellā + um**)

**pulavar ellām** niṇ nōkkiṇarē (puṇa.42:20-21)

[pulavar 'poets']

'**All the poets** look(ed) up to you.'

(noun + quantifier **ellā + um**)

poṅkiru **munṇir akam ellām** nōkkiṇai tiṅkaḷuḷ tōṇṇi irunta kuṇumuyāl  
(kali.144:17-18)

[**munṇir akam** 'inside the ocean']

<sup>3</sup> Note that the **ellā** in **ellām val ellā** 'You, who are capable of everything' is an address form used in classical Tamil to a male or a female.



‘O little hare residing in the moon, you looked **everywhere in the vast upsurging ocean** (for my lover).’

**ellā \_\_ um:**

(quantifier **ellā** + noun + glide + **um**)

**ellā maṇai-y-um** kalleṇṇaṇavē (*pura.296:3*)

[**maṇai** ‘house’]

‘**All the houses** made a big noise sounding “kal”.’

(quantifier **ellā** + noun + case marker + **um**)

vāṇ kaṇ māṇiṇum ... nilam vaḷam karappiṇum **ellā uyir-kk-um** illāl  
vāḷkkai (*pura.203:1, 2-3*)

[**uyir** ‘life’]

‘Even if the sky changes its place (of rainfall) or the land holds on to its bounty, there is no living/thriving **for all the lives**.’

**ellārum:**

(quantifier **ellār** + **um**)

**ellārum** aṇiya nōy ceytaṇavē ... kaṇṇē (*kuru.72:2, 5*)

‘(My lover’s) eyes made me (love)sick making **everyone** know.’

(Note that the quantifier **ellārum** is not preceded by a noun.)

**ellār \_\_ um:**

(quantifier **ellār** + case marker + **um**)

nellum nīrum **ellārkkum** eḷiya (*pura.58:10*)

[**ellārkkum** < **ellār** + **kk** + **um**]

‘Rice and water are easy (to get) **for everyone**.’

(Note that **ellārkkum** is not preceded by a noun to be quantified.)

(quantifier **ellār** + noun + **um**)

mutukāṭu ... **ellār puṛaṇ-um** tāṇ kaṇṭu ... taṇ puṛam kāṇpōr k  
kāṇpu aṛiyātē (*puṛa.356:4, 7, 9*)

[**puṛaṇ** 'back']

'Having seen **everyone's back**, this ancient (cremation) ground,  
does not know anyone who has seen its back.'

(quantifier **ellār** + noun + glide + **um**)

'**ellār māvum** vantaṇa (*puṛa.273:2*)

[**mā** 'horse']

'**Everyone's horses** returned.'

(noun + quantifier **ellār** + case marker + **um**)

nī cellā viṭuvāyēl ... neṭṭirum kūntal **kaṭavuḷar ellārkkum** muṭṭuppāṭu  
ākalum uṇṭu<sup>4</sup> (*kali.93:33, 35-36*)

[**kaṭavuḷar** 'gods']

'If you let go without going (there), there might even be an obstacle  
**for all the gods** with long dark hair.'

'If you don't go there, your women will be in trouble.'

(noun + **ellār** + postposition + **um**)

**celvar ellārullum** niṇ nal icai mikumē<sup>5</sup> (*pati.38:1-2*)

[**celvar** 'wealthy people']

'**Among all the wealthy people**, your good reputation excels.'

<sup>4</sup> See "The Conditional" for a discussion of **cellā viṭuvāyēl** in this example.

<sup>5</sup> One may also consider **ullum** as a postposition by itself.

**ellīrum:**(quantifier **ellīr** + **um**)**ellīrum** eṇ ceytīr eṇṇai nakutirō (kali.142:15)‘What did **you all** do? Are you laughing at me?’(Note that the quantifier **ellīrum** is not preceded by a noun.)**ellōr \_\_ um:**(quantifier **ellōr** + case marker + **um**)**ellōrkkum** koṭumati ... kumaṇaṇ nalkiya vaḷaṇē (pura.163:7, 9)[**ellōrkkum** < **ellōr** + **kk** + **um**]‘Give **everyone** the bounty that Kumaṇaṇ gave us.’(Note that the quantifier **ellōrkkum** is not preceded by a noun.)**ai \_\_ um:**(numeral **ai** + nominal + **um**)āṅku **aimpāl tiṇaiyum** kaviṇi (matu:325-326)[**ai** ‘five’; **pāl** ‘section’; **tiṇai** ‘landscape’]‘as **all the five landscapes** there attained abundant/fascinating beauty’**aintum:**(nouns + **aintu** + **um**)**tī vaḷi vicumpu nilaṇ nīr aintum** ṇāyīṇum tiṅkaḷum aṇaṇum aivarum

... māyōy niṇ vayiṇ parantavai uraittēm (pari.3:4-5, 10)

[**tī** ‘fire’; **vaḷi** ‘wind’; **vicumpu** ‘sky’; **nilaṇ** ‘the earth’; **nīr** ‘water’]‘O Dark One, we spoke of **all the five**, (namely) **the fire, the wind, the sky, the earth, and the water**, and of the sun, the moon, Duty, and the five (planets) etc., (all of) which have spread (out) from you.’

**aivarum:**(numeral personal pronoun **aivar** + **um**)

tī vaḷi vicumpu nilaṇ nīr aintum ñāyiṇum tiṅkaḷum aṇaṇum **aivarum**  
 ... māyōy niṇ vayiṇ parantavai uraittēm (*pari.3:4-5, 10*)  
 ‘O Dark One, we spoke of all the five, (namely) the fire, the wind,  
 the sky, the earth, and the water, and of the sun, the moon, Duty,  
 and **the five** (planets) etc., (all of) which have spread (out) from  
 you.’

**currum:**

(curru + um)

curunkaiyiṇ āyattār **currum** eṇintu kurumpai mulai p paṭṭa pūṇr  
 (*pari.16:20-21*)

[**currum** ‘all around’]

‘the red water from the bellows which her friends threw **all around**  
 and splashed on her budding breasts’

**mulutum:**(noun + **mulutu** + **um**)

kalai toṭu perum paḷam puṇ kūṇtu ūṇaliṇ **malai mulutum** kamaḷum  
 mātiram (*malai:292-293*)

[**malai** ‘mountain’]

‘the directions which smell good **all over the mountain** due to the  
 honey from the big (jack) fruit which oozes because the monkey(s)  
 scoop(s) them’

Universals:

*Structure and Example*

**alkalum:**

(time word **alkal** + **um** + verbal noun)

kāṇam emmoṭu kaḷintaṇar āyiṇ ... **alkalum aḷutal** mēvala āki p paḷi  
tīr kaṇṇum paṭukuva (aka.11:6,7, 13-15)

[**aḷutal** 'crying']

'If he had passed the forest with us, (our) flawless eyes would not cry **every night**, and would get some sleep too.'

**e \_\_ um:**

(interrogative **e** + noun + **um**)

nal ēru koḷpavar allāl tiru mā mey tīṇṭalar eṇru ... **eppoḷutum** collāl  
tarappaṭṭaval (kali.102:9-12)

[**poḷutu** 'time'; **eppoḷutum** < **e** + **poḷutu** + **um**]

'She is someone who is brought (here to the arena) **always** telling (everyone) that except those who take hold of the good bull (in the bull raid) no one can touch her.'

kokkiṇ ... toḷuti ... nāraiyoḍu **evvāyum** kavara (neṭu:15, 17)

[**vāy** 'section, region'; **evvāyum** < **e** + **vāy** + **um**]

'as the flock of cranes together with the herons took over / covered **every region**'

(interrogative **e** + glide + noun + noun + glide + **um**)

**e v vakai c ceyti y um**

(matu:516)

[**vakai** 'type, kind'; **ceyti** 'doing; work';

**e v vakai c ceyti y um**

< e + v (glide) + **vakai** + **ceyti** + y (glide) + **um**]  
 ‘any kind of work’

### **enrum:**

(interrogative **enru** + **um** + verb)

**enrum cellēn** **avaṇ** **kuṇru** **keḷu** **nāṭṭē** (pura.394:18)

‘I will not go any day to his country filled with hills.’

‘I will never go to his hilly country.’

(Note that the sense expressed is negative. The main verb in the sentence is negative: **cellēn** ‘I will not go.’)

### **ennatūum:**

(interrogative **ennatu** + **um** + verb)

**innicai** **aruvi** **p** **pāṭum** **ennatūum** **kēṭṭiyō** ... **aṇṇai** (aka.68:3-4)

[**ennatu** ‘of any kind’; **kēṭṭiyō** ‘Did/Do you hear?’]

‘Mother, did you hear the pleasant music of the waterfall and any (such) thing?’

‘Mother, did you hear the pleasant music of the waterfall or any thing similar?’

### **ennalum:**

(interrogative **ennal** + **um** + verbal noun)

**ennalum** **pariyalō** **ilam** (narr.150:6)

[**ennal** ‘of any amount’; **pariyal** ‘feeling sorry’]

‘We do not feel sorry in any amount.’

‘We do not feel sorry even a little.’

**en(n)ai \_\_ um:**(interrogative **ennai** + verb + **um**)

**ennai** nī **ceyyinum** uraittīvār il vaḷi munṇaṭi p paṇintu emmai uṇarttiya  
varuti maṇ (kali.73:14-15)

[**ennai** ‘anything’; **ceyyin** conditional < **cey** ‘to do’]

‘Whatever (wrong) you do, when there is no one to tell you kindly (about it), you come to fall at my feet and make up for my sulking.’

(interrogative **enai** + noun + **um**)

paci alaikkum pakai oṇru eṅkō ... kūḷiyar parantu alaikkum pakai  
oṇru eṅkō āaṅku **enai p pakaiyum** aṟiyunaṇ āy

(pura.136:9, 13-15)

[**enai** ‘any’; **pakai** ‘hostility, enmity’]

‘Shall I say that there is an enemy, namely, hunger which tosses (me) around? Shall I say that there is an(other) enemy, namely, the highway robbers who toss (me) around? Āy knows **any** (kind of these) **enemies**.’

**enaittum:**(interrogative **enaittu** + **um** + noun)

kaṭumā kaṭavuṟūm kōl pōl **enaittum koṭumai** ilai (kali.50:19-20)

[**enaittu** ‘of any kind’; **koṭumai** ‘cruelty’]

‘You **have no cruelty** like the whip which goads a rushing horse.’

‘You are not at all cruel like the whip which rushes a horse which is already running fast.’

(Note that the sense expressed is negative because of the negative verb **ilai**.)

**enaittu \_\_ um:**(interrogative **enaittu** + case marker + **um** + verb)ūrīr **enaittānum** eḷḷinum eḷḷalaṇ kēḷvan (kali.145:51-52)[**enaittu** 'of any kind'; **eḷḷu** 'to despise']

'O people of the town, even if you despise me to any amount, my lover-friend will not despise me.'

(interrogative **enaittu** + numeral + **um** + noun)inṇuyir aṇṇārku **enaittu onrum** tītu inmai eṇ uyir kāṭṭātō (kali.143:20-21)[**onru** 'one thing'; **tītu** 'danger']'Will my life not make it clear that there is **no danger** for the man who is like my sweet life?'(Note that the sense expressed is negative because of **inmai**.)**oruvarum:**(numeral pronoun **oruvar** + **um** + verb)palar kuṟai ceyta ... aṇṇārku **oruvarum illai** māto (pura.311:4-5)[**oruvar** 'one person'; **illai** 'there is not']'Alas, for the noble man who fulfilled the needs of many, **there is not a single person** (to help now).'(Note that the sense expressed is negative because of **illai**.)**oruvar \_\_ um:**(numeral pronoun **oruvar** + case marker + **um** + verb)**oruvarkkum** poyyā niṇ vāyil cūḷ vauval (pari.8:84)[**oruvar** 'one person'; **poy** 'to lie']'Do not grab an oath in your mouth **which normally does not lie to anyone**.'



**onrum:**(noun + numeral **onru** + **um**)**piḷai onrum** kāṇāṇ toḷutu piḷai kēṭkum tūyavan (*pari.12:60-61*)[**piḷai** ‘error’; **onru** ‘one thing’]‘the innocent man who did not see **any error** (in what he did) and asks (his lover) about the mistake (he supposedly committed)’(Note that the sense expressed is negative because of the negative verb in the clause: **kāṇāṇ** ‘He did not see.’)**nālum:**(day word **nāl** + **um** + verb)**nālum** eṇ neṇcu piṇi k koṇṭa aṇcilōti p perum tōḷ kuṟu makaḷ(*kuṟu.280:1-3*)[**piṇikkoḷ** ‘to hold tightly’]‘the young woman with big shoulders and a few soft tresses **who took hold** of my heart **forever**’**yā \_\_ um:**(interrogative **yā** + noun + **um**)iṭi umiḷ vāṇam nīṅki **yāṇkaṇum** kuṭi pati p peyarnta ... mutu pāl(*aka.77:5-6*)[**kaṇ** ‘place’; **yāṇkaṇum** < **yā** + **kaṇ** + **um**]‘the arid land from which the residents have moved away in **every direction**, as the thundering clouds left (without raining)’

(Note that the sense expressed is affirmative.)

**yāṅkum:**(interrogative **yāṅku** + **um** + verb)**yāṅkum** ariyavum uḷavō niṇakkē(*puṟa.56:15-16*)

[u]a ‘there are’]

‘**Is there** anything difficult for you (to accomplish), **anywhere?**’

(Note that the sense expressed is affirmative.)

yānkum itaṇiṇ koṭiyatu piṇitu oṇṇu illai (narr.322:1-2)

[illai ‘there is not’]

‘**Nowhere is anything** more cruel than this.’

(Note that the sense expressed is negative.)

yānkum iravu iṇantu ellai tōṇralatu (narr.378:5-6)

[tōṇralatu ‘does not appear’]

‘**The light/sun does not appear anywhere**, exceeding the darkness.’

‘**Nowhere does the light/sun appear**, overcoming the darkness.’

(Note that the sense expressed is negative.)

### yāṇṭōrum:

(oblique of noun + interrogative yāṇṭōr + um)

viyaṇ ṇālattu yāṇṭōrum toḷutu ēttum iraṅku icai muraciṇāy (kali.100:5-6)

[ṇālattu oblique of ṇālam ‘the earth’]

‘O man with a low sounding drum, whom **people from anywhere** in this vast earth praise and worship’

(Note that the sense expressed is affirmative.)

### yātum:

(interrogative yātu + um + noun)

yātum ūrē yāvarum kēlir (pura.192:1)

[ūr ‘town’]

‘**Every town is our town**. Everyone is our kin.’

(Note that the sense expressed is affirmative.)

(noun + interrogative **yātu** + **um**)

eṇ **tīram** **yātum** viṇaval (*kali.19:10*)

[**tīram** ‘goodness, nature’]

‘Do not enquire **anything about me.**’

(Note that the sense expressed is negative because of the negative imperative/optative **viṇaval** ‘do not enquire.’)

**yātu** \_\_\_\_ **um**:

(noun + interrogative **yātu** + **onru** + **um**)

attam naṇṇiya nātu keḷu peru viṇal **kaipporuḷ** **yātonrum** ilaṇē (*pura.313:1-2*)

[**kaipporuḷ** ‘thing in hand; wealth’; **onru** ‘one thing’]

‘The great skillful man with a claim for many countries, who proceeded toward the forest, does not have **anything in his hands.**’

(Note that the sense expressed is negative.)

**yār** \_\_\_\_ **um**:

(interrogative **yār** + case marker + conditional + **um** + noun)

makaḷirai maintuṟru amarpurra maintar akalam kaṭikuvēm eṇpavai  
**yārkkānum** **muṭiporuḷ** **anru** (*pari.20:91-93*)

[**yārkkānum** < **yār** + **kku** + **āyiṇ** + **um**; **muṭiporuḷ** ‘thing that is possible’]

‘It is **not possible for anyone** to say that they would renounce the chests of their young men who, because of their youth, desired other women.’

(Note that the sense expressed is negative because of **anru** ‘it is not.’ See “A Note on the Verb **āṇ**” for a discussion of the contracted form **ānum** < **āyinum**.)

**yārai<sub>um</sub>:**(interrogative **yārai** + glide + **um** + verb)

yārai eluva yārē nī emakku **yārai<sub>um</sub> allai** notumalāḷaṇai  
*(narr.395:1-2)*

[**allai** ‘you are not’]

‘Hey, who are you? Actually, who are you to us? **You are nobody**  
 (to us). You are a stranger.’

(Note that the sense expressed is negative.)

**yāvatum:**(noun + interrogative **yāvatu** + **um**)

**iṭumpai yāvatum** ariyā iyalpiṇar *(tiru:135-136)*

[**iṭumpai** ‘suffering’]‘people who have the nature of not knowing **any suffering**’

(Note that the sense expressed is negative.)

**yāvarum:**(interrogative **yāvar** + **um** + noun)

yātum ūrē **yāvarum kēḷir** *(pura.192:1)*

[**kēḷir** ‘kinsmen’]‘Every town is our town. **Everyone is our kin.**’

(Note that the sense expressed is affirmative.)

(interrogative **yāvar** + **um** + verb)

**yāvarum viḷai<sub>um</sub>** polantoti p putalvaṇ *(aka.16:5)*

[**viḷai** ‘to like, long for’]‘(his) son, wearing gold bracelets, **whom everyone desires**’

(Note that the sense expressed is affirmative.)

**yāvir \_\_ um:**(interrogative **yāvir** + verb + **um**)**yāvir āyinum** kūlai tār koṇṭu yām porutum eṇṇal ōmpumiṇ

(puṛa.88:1-2)

[ā ‘to be’; **āyinum** < conditional of ā + **um**]

‘Whoever you are, stop thinking that you could fight (with him) with your front line and back line warriors.’

(Note that the sense expressed is affirmative.)

**yāvirum:**(interrogative **yāvir** + **um** + verb)**yāvirum** em kēḷvar k **kāṇīrō**

(kali.145:61)

[**kāṇ** ‘to see’]<sup>6</sup>

‘Did anyone see my husband?’

(Note that the sense expressed is affirmative.)

**yāvaiyum:**(noun + interrogative **yāvai** + glide + **um**)neyttōr niṛa arakkiṇ **nīr ekki yāvaiyum** muttu nīr c cāntu aṭainta

mūuy t tatti

(pari.10:12-13)

[**nīr ekki** ‘water sprinkler’]

‘packing all the sprinklers, which spray lacquer-like blood-red water, in the box containing sandal paste mixed in fragrant cool water’

<sup>6</sup> In modern Tamil, it would be **yārāvatu** or **yārum** instead of **yāvirum** in a context like this: **yārāvatu eṇ** kaṇavaṇai p pārttīrkaḷā? **yārum eṇ** kaṇavaṇai p pārttīrkaḷā? ‘Did anyone see my husband?’

(interrogative **yāvai** + glide + **um** + noun)

**yāvaiyum** cenru cēkkallā p puḷḷa ... viyaṇ kuḷam (*aka.42:7-8, 9*)

[cēkkallā p pul 'birds which would not reach/arrive ... and stay']

'wide ponds where **no birds would go and stay**'

### **vaikalum:**

(day word **vaikal** + **um** + verb)

**vaikalum** valci inmaiyaṇ vayaṇ vayaṇ māri (*pura.211:17-18*)

[**vaikal** 'day, daybreak'; **māru** 'to change']

'**changing** from place to place **every day** because of lack of food  
(available in any one place)'

## NOMINAL COMPOUNDS<sup>1</sup>

GENERAL: The term “compound” in modern linguists’ terminology refers to a combination of nouns, which is not divisible into parts and the sum total of which is not the same as any of its individual parts.<sup>2</sup> This

---

<sup>1</sup> The traditional term for a compound is **tokai** ‘combining; putting together.’

<sup>2</sup> One wonders whether the traditional **anmolittokai** (= **bahuvrīhi** in Sanskrit), which is based on the technique of metonymy, is the only true Tamil compound in the Western sense of the term. See “Metonymy and Metaphor” for an example of **anmolittokai**.

Cf. Zvelebil (1967:103): “The classification of compounds in traditional grammars is a blend of formal and semantic criteria. Cf. Tol. S.895 ff. which gives six kinds of compounds (*vēṭṭumai*, *uvamai*, *viṇai*, *paṇpu*, *ummai*, *aṇmoli*). However, let us consider, e.g., the phrase *paṇaittōḷ*, bamboo (like) shoulders; according to traditional grammars, this is an *uvamaittokai*, a kind of compound expressing comparison. According to modern linguistic thought it is no compound. First, the phrase is divisible: *paṇai meṇ tōḷ* “soft bamboo (like) shoulders” may occur; second, no new meaning is coined here; the meaning of the phrase *paṇaittōḷ* is more or less equivalent to the sum of the meanings of its two parts, *paṇai* and *tōḷ*. No **sandhi** changes (like the lengthening of the initial *t* - of *tōḷ* in *paṇaittōḷ*) are diagnostic; they occur identically in phrases and compound-like units. On the other hand, *puṇkaṇ* s. sorrow, meanness, etc., is a compound, since it functions like a

study draws a structural distinction between “nominal compounds” and “noun phrases” in the following way. The nominal compound is made of stems, whereas the noun phrase contains at least one member which is a participle.<sup>3</sup> Nominal compounds are like nouns and therefore can be

---

single free form; it is indivisible (a phrase like *\*puṇ kaṭuṇ kaṇ* does not occur, but a phrase like *kaṭum puṇkaṇ* “severe, cruel poverty” might), and it has acquired, as a compound, new meaning which is not identical with the sum of the meanings of its two components.”

See also Zvelebil’s (1967:40, 103, 104) detailed discussion on the dilemma of the modern linguist about the category of “nominal compound” in Tamil. He says, for example:

“According to Bloch and Trager, if no formal characteristics can be discovered for distinguishing between compounds and phrases, then there are only phrases and not compounds in a given language.

“It is extremely difficult to draw a hard and fast line between phrases and compounds, since phrases in Tamil (especially O[ld] T[amil]) are often constructions of mere stems” (1967:104).

It may be noted that in the Tamil tradition, not only **paṇaittōḷ** (quoted above) but also items like **paṇai men tōḷ** (quoted above) are considered to be “compounds.” A traditional commentator gives a similar example for a compound: **maḷai vaṇ kai** ‘rain (like) bounteous hands’ (cf. Cēṇāvaraiyar’s commentary on Tolkāppiyam, collatikāram, Rule 414). The present chapter in this study follows the tradition.

<sup>3</sup> Examples:

#### Compound

**pukar muka vēḷam** ‘elephant with a speckled face’ (aka.12:11)

Here, none of the members (**pukar** ‘speck’; **mukam** ‘face’; **vēḷam** ‘elephant’) is a participle.

**aṇattu k kai** ‘lifted trunk of an elephant’ (pari.20:105)

[**aṇatt(u)** mutated stem < **\*aṇam** < **aṇṇam** ‘roof of the mouth’; **kai** ‘hand’]

**pakuttūṇ** ‘food to be shared; shared food’ (pati.38:15)

[**pakutt** past stem < **paku** ‘to divide’]

#### Noun phrase

**nīṇṭu akanṇa kaṇṇāḷ** (pari.11:46)

[**nīṇṭu** advp < **nī** ‘to extend’; **akanṇa** adjp < **akal** ‘wide’; **kaṇ** ‘eye(s)’]

‘the woman with eyes which are long and wide’



declined. That is, the last member in the compound, which is here called the head noun of the compound, is declinable.

**FORMATION:** The members of a nominal compound are verb stems, adjectives, and nouns (derived nouns such as the adjectival nouns, participial nouns, or verbal nouns, and non-derived nouns).<sup>4</sup> The only restriction is that the last item in the compound must be a noun (non-derived or derived), and it is the head noun of the compound.

In classical Tamil, the length of a nominal compound, that is, the number of members constituting a compound, seems to be indefinite. The longest undeclined nominal compound that is found in the anthologies has ten members: **mān taḷir mēni neṭu men paṇai t tōḷ kurun toṭi makalir** ‘mango shoot (like) complexioned women with tender, bamboo-like long and soft arms and small bangles’ (*pari.8:38*).<sup>5</sup> Despite the indefiniteness in length, the structural variation of this type of compound depends on the number of members in that compound. Given that any one of the two types of nouns, namely non-derived nouns and derived nouns, can be the

**āṇru avintu aṭaṅkiya ceyir tīr cemmāl**

‘O flawless Noble One, (who is) content, contained, and humble.’

(*pati.37:5*)

[**āṇru** advp < **āṇ** ‘be content’; **avintu** advp < **avi** ‘be contained’;

**aṭaṅkiya** adjp < **aṭaṅku** ‘be humble’; **ceyir** ‘flaw’; **tīr** ‘to be over, to end’;

**cemmāl** head noun < **cemmal** which is declined for the vocative case.]

<sup>4</sup> Verb stems which do not look like adjectives can function like “adjectives” or “modifiers.” See “Adjectives or Noun Modifiers” for the relation between a verb stem and an “adjective.”

Although, technically speaking, all nouns are derived forms (= root + formative suffix), a structural distinction may be drawn between adjectival/participial/verbal nouns and other types of nouns. For example, **collal** ‘speaking’ *vs.* **kal** ‘rock, stone.’ The verbal noun **collal** ‘speaking’ has a stem **col** ‘speak’ and an identifiable verbal noun suffix **al**, whereas in the substantive noun **kal** ‘rock/stone’, the formative suffix is not clear.

<sup>5</sup> By an “undeclined compound” is meant a compound made of stems only, and the head noun is not marked for grammatical case.

last member of a compound, the formula for predicting the number of structural patterns that compounds can have is  $2(4^{n-1})$ , where “n” is the number of members constituting the compound.

For example, if a compound has two members, it can have any one of the following eight patterns:

- (i) non-derived noun — non-derived noun: **kaḷi p pū** (aka.40:1)  
‘flower in the backwaters’
- (ii) adjective — non-derived noun: **vāṇ picir** (pati.11:1)  
‘white spray of waterdrops’
- (iii) derived noun — non-derived noun: **peyal maḷai** (kuru.174:1)  
‘pouring rain’
- (iv) verb stem — non-derived noun: **mī kai** (pati.40:12)  
‘raised hand(s)’
- (v) non-derived noun — derived noun: **kai piṇi** (aka.32:12)  
‘holding of the hands’
- (vi) adjective — derived noun: **tīn toṭai** (pati.66:1)  
‘pleasant composition’
- (vii) derived noun — derived noun: **paricilar verukkai** (pati.15:21)  
‘treasure of the suppliants’
- (viii) verb stem — derived noun: **viri cuṭar** ‘spreading rays’ (pari.19:100)

The formula  $2(4^{n-1})$  in this case, where  $n = 2$ , yields 8.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> There are 32 [i.e.,  $2(4^{3-1}) = 32$ ] theoretically possible structural patterns of a three-member compound, 128 [i.e.,  $2(4^{4-1}) = 128$ ] patterns of a four-member compound, 512 patterns of a five-member compound, and so on. A few other examples:

adj.—non-derived noun—derived noun:

**arum kaḷ noṭaimai** ‘exchange for precious toddy’ (pati.68:11)

### Semantic Interpretation of a Compound

The syntactic and semantic relations between the various members of a compound cannot easily be determined by grammatical rules. Syntactically, it can be said that the members tend to, but do not necessarily, qualify the closest nominal to their right. For example, in the seven-member compound **pacai kol mel viral perum tōḷ pulaitti** 'the washer woman with broad shoulders and soft fingers that scrub the starch (on clothes)' (*aka.34:11*), the first three members **pacai** 'starch', **kol** 'to scrub', and **mel** 'soft' modify the closest noun to their right, **viral** 'fingers.' The fifth member **perum** 'large, broad' modifies the noun closest to it on the right, **tōḷ** 'shoulders/arms.' The fourth and the sixth members, **viral** and **tōḷ**, together modify the last noun on the right, **pulaitti** 'washer woman', which is the head noun. On the other hand, in the compound **i-p-panṇu-il-tāy** (*puṛa.336:12*) 'this mother without (good) qualities' the first member **i** 'this' does not modify the noun **panṇu** '(good) qualities', which is immediately to its right. The first three members, **i**, **panṇu**, and **il** 'without, to be absent', modify the head noun **tāy** 'mother'; the meaning of the total structure is 'this mother without (good) qualities.'<sup>7</sup> Another example: **parēr eṛuḷ muḷavu t tōḷ** 'big, handsome, strong, drum-like shoulders/arms' (*pati.31:20*). All the members, **parēr** 'big and beautiful', **eṛuḷ** 'strength', and **muḷavu** 'drum', precede and modify the head noun **tōḷ** 'shoulders/arms.' Although the third member **muḷavu** is a noun, the preceding members do not modify it.

---

adj.—verb stem—non-derived noun—adj.—non-derived noun—derived noun:

**av-vāṅku unti am col pāṇmakaḷ**

(*aka.126:9*)

'the female bard with beautifully curved navel and pleasant words'

<sup>7</sup> The **p** following the first member **i** is the result of joining **i** with the following item **panṇu**, which begins with **p**. The third member **il** is a verb stem which means 'to be non-existent.'

For an accurate semantic interpretation of the compound one has to depend on literary conventions or contexts. For example, **pēy makaḷ** 'demon-woman' (*pati.22:37*) is a compound in which the first member (**pēy** 'ghost, demon') refers to the group (of demons) to which the second member (**makaḷ** 'woman') belongs. But, in the compound **vaḷai makaḷ** 'woman with bangles' (*pati.23:23*) which is formally similar to **pēy makaḷ**, the first member (**vaḷai** 'bangle, bracelet') refers to what the second member (**makaḷ** 'woman') is wearing. In yet another compound **vaḷai talai** 'head which is bending down' (*pati.13:6*) which is similar to **vaḷai makaḷ**, the first member **vaḷai** does not mean 'bangle' or 'bracelet', but 'bend down.'

## ADJECTIVAL NOUNS OR APPELLATIVE NOUNS

**GENERAL:** Nominal stems (i.e., adjectival stems, verbal noun stems, participial noun stems, substantive noun stems, and oblique stems) take a PNG and the nouns thus formed are here called ‘adjectival nouns.’<sup>1</sup> They signify a “complete” quality or “totality” of the state of their respective nouns. There is no particular time indicated by an adjectival noun.

An adjectival noun can be translated as ‘X has Y’ or ‘X with the quality Y’, where X is denoted by the PNG suffix and Y is the nominal stem serving as the base for the adjectival noun. If the nominal stem

---

<sup>1</sup> The same process has been described elsewhere as the “conjugation” of nouns (substantives) and adjectives, and the resulting forms of the conjugation are termed “pronominalized nouns,” “personal nouns,” and “personal adjectives” (Zvelebil 1967:15). One scholar refers to them as “appellative verbs” (Arunachalam:329). Also see “A Note on Stems” in “Morphophonemics.”

underlying the adjectival noun refers to a location, place, or geographical direction, the adjectival noun is understood as 'X belongs to Y' or 'X is in Y.'

The negative sense of an adjectival noun is normally expressed by the negative modifier of the nominal from which the adjectival noun is derived. Very rarely, *ā(t)* is appended to the stem and is subsequently followed by a PNG to produce a negative adjectival noun. Examples are given below.

Adjectival nouns, which function like any other nouns, can be declined. However, they are differentiated from verbal nouns and participial nouns in this study because the latter two are taken to be derived from verb roots. See "Verbal Nouns" and "Participial Nouns."

**FORMATION:** Adjectival nouns are derived by suffixation. A PNG is added to a nominal stem. The affix *i*, *ā(t)*, or a glide (*ñ*, *n*, *y*, or *v*) is inserted between the stem and the PNG wherever necessary.<sup>2</sup> The affixes *ā*, *an*, or *in* intervene between the stem and the PNG in some cases.<sup>3</sup> See "Person-Number-Gender" for the PNG categories.

---

<sup>2</sup> This *i* and the past/completive marker *i* could be related historically, or it could just be an enunciative vowel. See Zvelebil (1967:24), who considers this *i* in adjectival nouns as a derivational suffix.

<sup>3</sup> The affix *ā* has the meaning 'person', and the affixes *an* and *in* could be related to the oblique markers *an* and *in*. Some might consider them as "empty morphs" (cf. Zvelebil 1967:32). Naccīṇārkkīṇiyar's interpretation of certain forms where *an* is used is insightful. For example, this commentator takes the form *ceyvāna* (*kali.83:19*) to mean 'like ... which are done.' This treatment of *ceyvāna* (*ceyv* non-past/non-completive stem + *an* + *a* PNG) leads one to consider *an* as giving the sense 'like.' Another example where Naccīṇārkkīṇiyar interprets *an* similarly is *koḷvanai* 'up until (I) get hold of (him)' ("koḷḷum aḷavum" *kali.147:33*). See "Notes on Miscellaneous Items" for more on *an* and *in*.

PNG for adjectival/appellative nouns

1st person singular: **en, ēn**

1st person plural, honorific: **am, ām, ēm**

2nd person singular: **avai, āy, ai, ōy**

2nd person plural, honorific: **avir, ir, ĩr**

3rd person masculine singular: **avan, an, ān, ōn**

3rd person feminine singular: **avaḷ, aḷ, āḷ, i, ōḷ**

3rd person human plural, honorific: **ar, avar, ār, ōr**

3rd person neuter singular: **aḥtu, atu, atai, (t)tu**

3rd person neuter plural: **a, avai**

EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: nominal stem + PNG

*PNG      Structure and Example*

**a:**    (3rd person neuter plural)

(non-oblique stem + a)

uṛu **kāla** kāṇ

(*pari.20:9-10*)

[uṛu 'excessive, abundant'; kāl 'wind']

'forest **with** much **wind**'

'forest where the wind is gusty'

(non-oblique stem + glide + a)

kaṇṇiṇum **katava** niṇ mulaiyē

(*aink.361:4*)

[kata 'firm']

'Your breasts **are firmer** than your eyes.'

varuṭai māṇ **kuḷaviya** vaḷa malai (kali.43:14)  
 [kuḷavi 'young one']  
 'fertile mountain(s) **with the young ones** of the varuṭai-deer'

eṇava kēṇmati (aka.379:5)  
 [eṇa 'mine' < eṇ 'my' + a case marker;  
 eṇava < eṇa + glide v + a]  
 'Listen to **my** thoughts.'

(oblique stem + a)

niḷal tēyntu ulaṛiya **maratta** ... kāṭu (aka.1:11, 19)  
 [maratt oblique of maram 'tree(s)']  
 'The forests **have** dried up **trees** with skimpy shade.'

naccinār īpavai ... **nummavē** (pari.20:85)  
 [num oblique of nīr or nīyir 'you'; plural of \*nun 'your' singular]  
 'What(ever) the people who like you give, **are yours**.'

(non-oblique stem + an + a)

villōṇ **kālana** kaḷalē (kuru.7:1)  
 [kāl 'leg(s), foot, feet']  
 'The warrior's anklets are **on** the bowman's **ankles**.'

(adjectival stem + i + glide + a)

iṇiya ceytu (kali.53:12)  
 [iṇ 'sweet, pleasant']  
 'having done **nice things**'



(oblique stem + **i** + glide + **a**)

maṭai māṇ ceppil **tamiya** vaikiya peyyā p pū (kuru.9:2-3)

[**tam** oblique of **tām** 'self']

'unworn flowers which stay **by themselves** in a jar with elegant rim'

'unworn flowers which stay alone in a jar with elegant rim'

(non-oblique stem + **in** + **a**)

paṇai **eruttina** ... pala pakaṭu (pura.387:7, 11)

[**eruttu** 'back of the neck, nape']

'many bulls **which have a broad nape**'

(adjectival stem + **āt** + **an** + **a**)

peruma nī emakku **innātana** pala ceyyinum niṇ inru amaital vallām (kuru.309:6-8)

[**in** 'sweet, pleasant'; **innātana** < **in** + **āt** + **an** + **a**]<sup>4</sup>

'Lord, even if you do many **unpleasant things** to us (hon.) we cannot be at peace without you.'

(Note that it is a negative noun.)

---

<sup>4</sup> It is possible to construe **innātana** as a negative participial noun rather than as an adjectival noun, because the affix **āt** signifying negation is not very commonly added to an adjectival stem. Like **perutta** 'large' and similar "adjectives," **innātana** also supports the view that "adjectives" in classical Tamil manifest verbal quality.

[tol 'distant, old, ancient'; aḥtē < aḥtu + ē]<sup>5</sup>

'Our youth has passed and is very **distant/ancient** (now).'

**atu**: (3rd person neuter singular)

(non-oblique stem + **atu**)

yāṇatu pacalai

(*narr.50:7*)

[yāṇ 'beauty']

'The lovesick pallor is **beautiful**.'

(non-oblique stem + glide + **atu**)

maṭavatu amma maṇi niṛa eḷili

(*narr.316:1*)

[maṭa 'gullible, simple, stupid']

'The gem-colored cloud is certainly **gullible**.'

(non-oblique stem + **in** + **atu**)

kūr ukir māṇṭa kuḷampinatu ... kutirai

(*kali.96:25-26*)

[kuḷampu 'hoof']

'The horse **has hooves** with sharp fully grown claws.'

**atai**: (3rd person neuter singular)

(non-oblique stem + glide + **atai**)

kaiyatai ... toṭi

(*kali.85:6-7*)

[kai 'arm, hand']

'The bangles are **on** (your) **hands**.'

'You have bangles on your hands.'

<sup>5</sup> Actually, **aḥtu** is a variant of **atu** '(that) it.' The extra letter **ḥ** here makes the word **aḥtu** function as a metrical foot (**cīr**) in the line in which it occurs, which would be impossible if it is just **atu**. Commentators would refer to it as an **eḷuttu-p-pēru aḷapeṭai** or **virittal vikāram**.

**am:** (1st person plural/honorific)

(non-oblique stem + **am**)

yāmē ... irutalai p pulliṇ ōr **uyirammē** (*aka.12:4-5*)

[**uyir** 'life breath']

'Like a bird with two heads, **we have** one **life-breath** (and two bodies).'

**palam eṇṇu** ikaḷtal ōmpumiṇ

(*pura.301:11*)

[**pala** 'many']

'Stop despising (him) thinking "**We are many** (and he is one)."'

**ar:** (3rd person plural/honorific)

(non-oblique stem + **ar**)

vāl narai k **kūntalar** naṇṇar nalattar toṇ mutu peṇṭir (*matu:408-409*)

[**kūntal** 'tresses']

'very old women **with** goodness, loveliness, and long grey **hair**'

'very old good and lovely women with long grey hair'

**ciṛāar**

(*aka.107:17*)

[**ciṛu** 'small, little']

'**children**'

(oblique stem + **ar**)

vāl narai k kūntalar naṇṇar **nalattar** toṇ mutu peṇṭir (*matu:408-409*)

[**nalatt** oblique of **nalam** 'loveliness']

'very old women with goodness, **loveliness**, and long grey hair'

'very old good and **lovely** women with long grey hair'

**moḷi peyar tēettar** (kuru.11:7)

[tēett oblique of tēm ‘country’]

‘He is **in a country** where the language is different.’

(non-oblique stem + glide + ar)<sup>6</sup>

**valaiñar kuṭi** (peru.274)

[valai ‘net’]

‘the neighborhood of **the people with fishing nets**’

**vaṇ kai viṇainar** (pati.62:16)

[viṇai ‘task, job, action’]

‘strong handed **people with a task**’

‘people with strong hands, engaged in a task’

**nakaivar ‘allies’; pakaivar ‘enemies’** (pura.398:9)

[nakai ‘friendliness, smile’; pakai ‘enmity, hostility’]

(non-oblique stem + i + glide + ar)

**nōṇpiyar** (narr.22:6)

[nōṇpu ‘penance’]

‘those who do penance’

**maṇi tikaḷ nutaliyar** (pari.10:77)

[nutal ‘forehead’]

‘women **with foreheads** on which gems glitter’

(verbal noun stem + glide + ar)

**aruppam ... aḷinta maṇa k kōṭṭaiyar** (pari.10:57)

[kōṭu ‘to bend, be crooked’;

---

<sup>6</sup> Cf. 1.3 in “Morphophonemics.”

**kōṭṭaiyar** < **kōṭṭai** ‘crookedness’ + glide **y** + **ar**  
 < **kōṭu** + **ai** verbal noun suffix + glide **y** + **ar**]  
 ‘**people with stray mind** that has lost its strength’  
 (Here **kōṭṭai** is treated as a noun derived from the verb **kōṭu** and is taken to mean ‘crookedness.’ Normally, **kōṭṭai** is interpreted to mean ‘fortress.’)

(oblique stem + **āl** + **ar**)

**cākāṭṭālar** *kampalai* (*pati.27:14*)  
 [**cākāṭṭ(u)** oblique of **cākāṭu** ‘cart, carriage’]  
 ‘the noise of **people with carts**’

(non-oblique stem + **in** + **ar**)

**kuḷai k kātinar** (*kali.103:8*)  
 [**kātu** ‘ear lobe’]<sup>7</sup>  
 ‘women **with** rings on their **lobes**’

(oblique stem + **in** + **ar**)

**kōṭu cuṭu nūrrinar** (*matu.401*)  
 [**nūrr(u)** oblique of **nūru** ‘powder, dust, powdered lime’]  
 ‘**people who** bake oyster shells and (therefore) **have** (powdered lime) **dust** (on them)’

---

<sup>7</sup> Both **kātu** and **cevi** mean ‘ear’ in modern Tamil. However, one literary context (*pari.11:97*), where both terms are used, suggests that **kātu** refers to the outer ear, specifically to the lobe, while **cevi** refers to the inner ear. Other literary contexts (earlier and later) confirm these identifications.

**avar:** (3rd person plural/honorific)

(non-oblique stem + **avar**)

**illavar**

(*aka.34:16*)

[il 'house']

'those who are in the house'

'those who stay in the house'

(verbal noun stem + **in** + **avar**)

poyyāṭal āṭum **puṇarppinavar**

(*pari.11:89*)

[**puṇarppu** 'union, uniting' < **puṇar** 'to join']

'women who play with a pretense of **uniting**'

**avaḷ:** (3rd person feminine singular)

(adjectival stem + **avaḷ**)

**nallavaḷ**

(*pari.12:92*)

[nal 'good']

'good woman'

(Some might derive **nallavaḷ** from **nalla** + **aḷ**. But see the next example which would not yield such segmentation.)

(oblique stem + **avaḷ**)

**niṇ maruṅku cāru koḷ tuṛakkattavaḷ**

(*pari.19:5-6*)

[**tuṛakkatt** oblique of **tuṛakkam** 'liberation, heaven']

'the woman from heaven who sits beside you in celebration'

**avan:** (3rd person masculine singular)

(non-oblique stem + **avan**)

**viralavan** putalvan tāy

(*kurū.359:5-6*)

[**vir**al 'triumph']  
 'mother of the son of the triumphant man'

**avir**: (2nd person honorific/plural)

(non-oblique stem + **avir**)

vinavanmin ūravir (kali.147:53)  
 [ū 'town']  
 'People of the town, do not ask me.'

**avai**:

(2nd person singular)

(non-oblique stem + **avai**)

āṛiru tōlavai (pari.21:67)  
 [tō 'shoulders/arms']  
 'You have twelve arms.'

(non-oblique stem + glide + **avai**)

valampuri vaya nēmiyavai (pari.15:59)  
 [nēmi 'discus']  
 'You have a right-spiralled conch and a victorious discus.'

(non-oblique stem + **in** + **avai**)

vaya ampinavai (pari.15:60)  
 [ampu 'arrow']  
 'You have victorious arrows.'

(3rd person neuter plural)

(non-oblique stem + **avai**)

kālavai ... ceyvuṛu kiṅkiṇi (kali.85:1, 2)

[**kāl** ‘leg, foot’]

‘Well made jingle bells are **on** (your) **ankles**.’

**aḷ**: (3rd person feminine singular)

(adjectival noun stem + glide + **aḷ**)

āṇā c **cīrumaiyaḷ**

(*kuṛi*:26)

[**cīrumai** ‘lowliness, humility’ < **cīru** ‘small’ + **mai**]

‘she, with **endless humility**’

(oblique stem + **aḷ**)

naṇṇutal nītta **tilakattaḷ**

(*kali*.143:3)

[**tilakatt** oblique of **tilakam**, a decorative mark on a woman’s forehead, between the eyebrows or a little higher]

‘**the woman with a tilakam** that has left her forehead’<sup>8</sup>

‘**the woman without a tilakam** on her forehead’

(Note the intricacy involved in this formation. In this context, there is no **tilakam** on the woman’s forehead, because it has gone from her forehead. The adjectival noun **tilakattaḷ** is built on the entire phrase **naṇṇutal nītta tilakam** ‘the tilakam which has left [her] forehead.’)

(oblique stem + **in** + **aḷ**)

tiruttā c **cumaṭṭinaḷ**

(*kali*.109:13)

[**cumaṭṭ(u)** oblique of **cumaṭu**, a pad for carrying pots on one’s head]

‘**woman with a head pad** that is not arranged properly’

<sup>8</sup> A similar example: **cenru cēkkallā p puḷḷa ... kuḷam** (*aka*.42:8) which literally means ‘the ponds have **birds which do not go and stay over**.’ However, it signifies that the ponds are dry and therefore the birds do not go and stay there.



**an:** (3rd person masculine singular)

(non-oblique stem + glide + **an**)

**eṇrum** ira varal **mālaiyan** (kuri:238-239)  
 [mālai 'nature, characteristic, habit']  
 'He has the habit of coming (for a rendezvous) every night.'

**kolaivan** yār kolō ... **vilaivan** pōlān (pura.152:8, 9)  
 [kolai 'killing'; vilai 'loot']  
 'Who is he, the killer? He looks like someone with loot.'

(non-oblique stem + **in**/glide + **an**)

**kaccinan** **kaḷalinan** ceccai k **kaṇṇiyan** (tiru:208)  
 [kaccu 'wrap-around clothing', kaḷal 'warrior's anklet',  
 kaṇṇi 'head-garland']  
 'He has a garb, warrior's anklets, and a head-garland of ceccai leaves.'

(verbal noun stem + **an**)

talai nāl **aṇṇa pēṇalan** (narr.332:8)  
 [pēṇal 'cherishing'  
 < pēṇ 'to cherish, foster, appreciate']<sup>9</sup>  
 'He has the nature of appreciating (me) as on the first day (of our meeting).'

---

<sup>9</sup> Adjectival nouns like this, where a verbal noun ending with **al** provides the stem, are identical in structure to certain negative personal verbs (e.g., **pēṇalan** 'he will not cherish'). The context determines the meaning.

(verbal noun stem + **āḷ** + **an**)

**nannarāḷan**

(*narr.100:12*)

[**nannar** ‘good quality’]

‘good man’

**ātu**<sup>10</sup>: (3rd person neuter singular)

(non-oblique stem + **atu**)

uṛantai k kuṇātu

(*aka.4:14*)

[**kuṇa** east’]

‘that which is in the east of Uṛantai’

**ām**: (1st person plural/honorific)

(oblique stem + glide + **ām**)

iruvām itaiyē

(*kuṛu.237:4*)

[**iru** ‘two’; **iruvām** ‘we two’]

‘between the two of us’

**āy**: (2nd person singular)

(non-oblique stem + **āy**)

**kātalāy**

(*pari.18:11*)

[**kātal** ‘love, affection’]

‘My love!’

---

<sup>10</sup> It is a variant of **atu**. In this example, **ātu** is a result of joining **atu** ‘that it’ to **kuṇa**: cf. 3.2 in “Morphophonemics.”

(non-oblique stem + **in** + **āy**)

tēn nāru **katuppināy**

(*kali.40:9*)

[**katuppu** 'hair, tresses']

'You, with sweet smelling tresses.'

**ār**: (3rd person honorific/plural)

(non-oblique stem + **ār**)

nuṭaṅku noci **nucuppār**

(*pari.9:49*)

[**nucuppu** 'waist']

'women with swaying slender waists'

(non-oblique stem + **in** + **ār**)

maruppu aṅcum **neñcinār**

(*kali.103:69*)

[**neñcu** 'heart']

'those with a heart afraid of the horns (of the bull)'

**āl**: (3rd person feminine singular)

(non-oblique stem + **āl**)

āṭu akal **alkulāl**

(*kali.52:16*)

[**alkul** 'pelvic area, hip']

'the woman with a swinging wide hip'

(non-oblique stem + **in** + **āl**)

cōrntu vīl **katuppināl**

(*kali.52:12*)

[**katuppu** 'hair, tresses']

'the woman with loose hair that is let down'

**ān:** (3rd person masculine singular)

(adjectival stem + **ān**)

**perumān** parattaimai (kali.82:21)  
 [peru(m) 'great']<sup>11</sup>  
 'the Great One's (Lord's) love for other women'

(non-oblique stem + **ān**)

turaivaṇ tam ūrāṇē (kuru.97:3)  
 [ūr 'town']  
 'The Turaivaṇ is in his (home)town.'

(non-oblique stem + **in** + **ān**)

iraṅkum muraciṇān (pari.21:38)  
 [muracu 'royal drum']  
 'the man with the royal drum which sounds in a low tone'

**i:** (3rd person feminine singular)

(non-oblique stem + glide + **i**)

iraṇṭu ari kaḷvi nam kātālōlē (kuru.312:1)  
 [kaḷ 'secrecy, shrewdness, deception']<sup>12</sup>  
 'My lady-love is a deceiver, knowing two (ways of behavior).'

<sup>11</sup> Some might consider deriving **perumān** from **perumai** + **ān**. This study prefers to derive it from **peru** + **m** + **ān**. Cf. 5.3 in "Morphophonemics."

<sup>12</sup> Cf. 7.1 in Morphophonemics. It is possible to consider **kaḷ** as a verb meaning 'to deceive' in which case **kaḷvi** could be construed as a participial noun: **kaḷ** + **v** non-past marker + **i** PNG.

ciru vaṇ **kaṇṇi**

(aka.385:17)

[**kaṇ** 'eye(s)']

'little **woman with cool determination / hard-heartedness**'

**ir:** (2nd person honorific/plural)

(non-oblique stem + glide + **ir**)

**kiḷavir** pōla

(malai:166)

[**kiḷa** 'claim; right']

'like those who have a right'

(oblique stem + **ir**)

pulaṇ uṭai **māntir**

(kali.22:4)

'O people who have wisdom.'<sup>13</sup>

(verbal noun stem + **ir**)

eṇṇai nakutirō **nalla nakāalir** maṇ kolō yāṇurra allal uṟṟiyāṇ māya

malar māṛpu pulli p puṇara p perin (kali.142:15-18)

[**naku** 'to laugh'; **nakāal** 'laughing']<sup>14</sup>

'Are you all laughing at me? Will you have a good laugh, I wonder, if I get to embrace his illusive wide chest and unite with him who made me experience the grief (of lovesickness) I have (now)?'

<sup>13</sup> Stem: **maṇ** 'to be established; to be everlasting', as in **maṇitar** 'human beings.' The suggested derivation is **māntir** (2nd person) < **māntar** (3rd person) < **maṇitar** (**maṇ** + **i** + **t** + **ar**) by deleting **i** and lengthening the root vowel **a** in compensation. See also Zvelebil (1967:30). The *Madras Tamil Lexicon* derives **maṇitaṇ** 'man' from the Sanskrit **manu-ja** (V.3136). It gives no derivation for **māntar** (V.3159).

<sup>14</sup> One modern commentator, P.V. Somasundaranar, takes **nakāalir** as a negative optative.

**īr**<sup>15</sup>: (2nd person honorific/plural)

(non-oblique stem + **īr**)

**ūrīr** pōla c curattiṭai iruntaṇir (pura.141:4)

[**ūr** 'hometown, locality']

'You are in the forest as if **you are in your hometown.**'

**en**: (1st person singular)

(non-oblique stem + **en**)

nin uḷḷi vanta ... **paricilen** (pura.211:6-7)

[**paricil** 'reward, gift']

'**I am a suppliant** who came thinking of you.'

(Note that **paricilen** can be understood as 'I who need a gift.')

**ēm**: (1st person plural/honorific)

(non-oblique stem + glide + **ēm**)

vēntaṇ **pācaraiyēmē** (aka.24:18)

[**pācarai** 'war camp']

'**We are in the king's war camp.**'

(non-oblique stem + **in** + **ēm**)

pala nāṭu **neñciṇēm** (kali.35:19)

[**neñcu** 'heart']

'**we have a heart** which seeks many things'

---

<sup>15</sup> It is a variant of **ir**.

**ēn:** (1st person singular)

(non-oblique stem + glide + **ēn**)

poḷutu maṟuttu uṇṇum **uṇṭiyēn** (pura.399:17)

[**uṇṭi** 'food, edible items, meal']

'**I** have (the habit of) eating **a meal** denying (it) at times.'

'I eat infrequently.'

(non-oblique stem + **in** + **ēn**)

neñcu aṟaipōkiya **aṟivinērḱē** (aka.26:26)

[**aṟivu** 'knowledge, wisdom']

'for **me** with **a wisdom** that has gone low'

**ai:** (2nd person singular)

(non-oblique stem + **ai**)

nīyum tāyai ivaṟku (aka.16:13)

[**tāy** 'mother']

'**You** also **are a mother** to him.'

tavirtta tērai viḷartta **kaṇṇai** (pura.353:5)

[**tēr** 'chariot'; **kaṇ** 'eyes']

'**You have a chariot** which you have abandoned. **You have pale eyes.**'

(oblique stem + **ai**)

uraṇ uṭai **uḷḷattai** (kali.12:10)

[**uḷḷatt** oblique of **uḷḷam** 'heart, mind']

'**You have a heart** which has strength.'

(non-oblique stem + **āl** + **an** + **ai**)

nī emakku yārai<sup>u</sup>m allai **notumalāḷanai** (narr.395:1-2)  
[**notumal** 'strangeness, unknown-ness']  
'You are no one to us. **You are a stranger.**'

(non-oblique stem + **in** + **ai**)

āṇā **maintinai** (kali.96:2)  
[**maintu** 'strength']  
'**You have endless strength.**'

**ōy:** (2nd person singular)

(non-oblique stem + **ōy**)

tuṛai<sup>va</sup>ṇai nī in<sup>itu</sup> mui<sup>ya</sup>ṅkumati **kātalōyē** (aink.148:2-3)  
[**kātal** 'love']  
'**O you with love** (for him), embrace the man from the shore well.'

(non-oblique stem + **in** + **ōy**)

tuḷāy mēval **mārpinoy (pari.13:60)  
[**mārp**u 'chest']  
'**You, who have a chest** which the tuḷāy leaves have joined.'  
'O you who are wearing a garland of **tuḷāy.**'**

**ōr:** (3rd person plural/honorific)

(non-oblique stem + **ōr**)

ivaṇōr (kuru.395:4)  
[**ivaṇ** 'this place, here']  
'**people who belong to this place**'



**nam kātālōr** (kali.36:11)

[**kātal** ‘love, affection’]

‘our (hon.) lover’

(oblique stem + **ōr**)

**iru nilattōrum** (pari.19:4)

[**nilatt** oblique of **nilam** ‘land, world’]

‘people of both worlds’

(adjectival stem + **ōr**)

**nallōr yārkol** (kuru.7:2)

[**nal** ‘good’]

‘Who are (these) good people?’

(adjectival stem + glide + **ōr**)

**putuvōr p puṇartal veyyan** (kali.75:10)

[**putu** ‘new’]

‘He likes to unite with new people.’

**ōl**: (3rd person feminine singular)

(non-oblique stem + glide + **ōl**)

**maṇaiyōl** (aka.14:14)

[**maṇai** ‘household, home’]

‘woman of the house’

**ōṇ:** (3rd person masculine singular)

(non-oblique stem + glide + **ōṇ**)

malai **kiḷavōṇ** (kali.40:34)  
 [kiḷa 'claim']  
 'he who has a claim for the mountain'

(oblique stem + **ōṇ**)

tammōṇ koṭumai (narr.88:6)  
 [tām oblique of tām 'he', honorific]  
 'his cruelty'

(non-oblique stem + **iṇ** + **ōṇ**)

cīṛaru **munpiṇōṇ** (kali.101:8)  
 [munpu 'physical strength']  
 'the man who has the strength difficult to be disapproved of by hissing'

**(t)tu:** (3rd person neuter singular)

(adjectival noun stem + **ttu**)

putuvōrttu ... iv aḷuṅkal ūrē (kuru.385:7)  
 [putuvōr 'unknown people' < putu 'new, unknown']  
 'This noisy town has new people.'

(non-oblique stem + **tu**)<sup>16</sup>

kavalai **mākkaṭtu** i-p-pētai ūrē (kuru.159:7)  
 [mākkaḷ 'people']  
 'This innocent town has people who care.'

<sup>16</sup> Some might consider the suffix to be **ttu** in these cases.

**mallarrru ... im malai kelu verpu** (*narr.93:4*)

[**mallal** 'bounty']

'This valley surrounded by mountains **is bountiful.**'

(adjectival stem + **ā(t)** + **tu**)

nani **innātu** (*kuru.245:2*)

[**in** 'sweet, pleasant']

'it would be very **unpleasant**'

(Note that it is a negative noun.)

(adjectival stem + **i** + **tu**)

**vālitu** (*kali.105:18*)

[**vāl** 'white']

'**the white one**'

kāntal nāltōrum **putitu** īna (*kali.53:5*)

[**putu** 'fresh, new']

'Everyday, the kāntal bushes put out **flowers that are fresh, and ...**'

(non-oblique stem + **in** + **tu**)

puravē ... **veṇkurumpinru** (*pura.386:12, 13*)

[**veṇkurumpu** 'small, cruel, dangerous habitats']

'the uncultivated land **has difficult habitats**'

pinai ... kāṭṭu iralaiyoṭu vatiyum **puravirru** amma ... **ūrē**

(*narr.121:3-5*)

[**puravu** 'uncultivated area, forest, jungle']

'**The town has uncultivated areas** where the doe stays around with its mate in the jungle.'

## SECTION 3



## STEM CLASSIFICATION ON A PHONOLOGICAL BASIS

GENERAL: See “A Note on Stems” in “Morphophonemics.” Nominal stems do not undergo complicated grammatical processes and therefore a classification scheme for them is not essential. Western missionaries who wrote grammars of Tamil classified Tamil nouns into several groups for the sake of declining them, but such classification does not seem necessary for the purposes of this study. Verbs reflect a great deal of variation, and it is hoped that a classification of the verb stems on the basis of the different suffixes they take in classical Tamil will provide a helpful conceptual framework for the reader.<sup>1</sup> This study is not intended to teach the reader how to generate classical Tamil verbs. An analysis of classical

---

<sup>1</sup> Modern scholars classify Tamil verbs either as weak and strong groups, or into several classes. For example, Andronov classifies Tamil verbs into weak and strong on the basis of the type of the verbal noun suffix added to the verb stem:

“The basic form of the Tamil verb, i.e. the form used to name an action (e.g., in dictionaries) is that of the verbal noun in - (த)தல் -(t)tal ...; e.g., செய்தல் ‘doing, to do’, அறிதல் ‘knowing, to know’, ... படித்தல் ‘reading, to read’ ....

Tamil verbs into various classes is, in fact, not necessary here. However, for the sake of describing the stem forms found in classical Tamil poems and for understanding that different conjugated forms could signify a single grammatical notion (e.g., **koḷi** and **koṇṭu** — adverbial participle of **koḷ** ‘to take hold’), the possible types of verb stems are discussed below.

The forms that most lend themselves to a classifying scheme are the adverbial participles of classical Tamil verbs. The infinitive forms provide some help, other non-past verb forms none at all. The infinitive is also a non-past form. Even so, it seems futile to classify the verb stems on the basis of their non-past forms. Therefore, the classification of verb stems is given in the following paragraphs on the basis of their attested adverbial participles in classical Tamil. This classification might seem unusual. However, it seems the best way to provide a conceptual framework for classical Tamil verb stems which behave morphophonemically alike.

---

“Verbs, taking the suffix **தல்** **-tal** are weak verbs; e.g., **செய்தல்** ‘doing, to do’; Verbs, taking the suffix **த்தல்** **-ttal** are strong verbs; e.g., **படித்தல்** ‘reading, to read’...” (Andronov 1969:127).

Hart and Hart (1979:41) consider that it is convenient “to speak of seven classes of Tamil verbs.” Their classification, which follows that of Graul, is as follows:

- 1a. **cey** ‘to do’
- 1b. **koḷ** ‘to take’
- 1c. **vel** ‘to conquer’
- 2. **uṭkār** ‘to sit down’
- 3. **vāṅku** ‘to buy’
- 4. **cāppiṭu** ‘to eat’
- 5a. **uṇ** ‘to eat’
- 5b. **ṭiṇ** ‘to eat’
- 5c. **kēḷ** ‘to ask, hear’
- 5d. **vil** ‘to sell’
- 6. **pār** ‘to see’
- 7. **naṭa** ‘to walk’
- Irregular: **vā** ‘to come’; **pō** ‘to go’

### Stem-types Discerned from the Adverbial Participles

Classical Tamil adverbial participles end with **i**, **y**, or **u**, which are added to the past stem of the verb.<sup>2</sup> If the markers **i**, **y**, and **u** are removed from the adverbial participle form, one is left with what can be construed as the “past stem.” On the basis of the shapes of such past stems and how they behave morphophonemically, the following two groups are obtained: the stem-types discerned from the adverbial participles ending with **i** or **y** and the stem-types discerned from the adverbial participles ending with **u**.

#### Stem-types Discerned from the Adverbial Participles Ending with **i** or **y**:

Adverbial participles ending with **i** or **y** are not attested for every verb, but are associated with all types of verbs in this period. Their past stem is the same as their adverbial participle form, so the **i** and **y** in these forms are here called the past/completive marker.

Type (i): Stems which end with a consonant. They take the past/completive marker **i**. Examples:

**uṇ** ‘to eat, enjoy, consume’, **pēṇ** ‘to care for’, **muraṇ** ‘to oppose’, **paḷun** ‘to ripen’, **tar** ‘to bring (about), trigger’, **var** ‘to come (about), emerge’, **vār** ‘to comb, split, straighten’, **etir** ‘to respond, react’, **āl** ‘to make noise, rejoice’, **col** ‘to reveal’, **vel** ‘to conquer’, **iyal** ‘to move gently’, **tev** ‘to snatch’, **āl** ‘to rule over’, **kol** ‘to take hold, draw toward self, receive, accept, grasp, grab, hook’, **potuḷ** ‘to

---

<sup>2</sup> See “The Past Stem” for information on the past stem and “The Adverbial Participle” for the rationale behind keeping the past stem and the adverbial participle separate, although they are not different in some instances.



crowd', **kūn** 'to bend', **man** 'to be established, be everlasting', **kavin** 'to adorn, be abundant.'

Type (ii): Stems which end with a vowel. Here, the disyllabic stems ending with **u** are open and contain short vowels. Stems ending with a long vowel except **ī** and **ai** take the past/completive marker **y**. Stems ending with **ī** or **ai** take the past/completive marker **i**. Among the stems ending with a short vowel, those with stem-final **a** take the past/completive marker **i** or **y**, while the others take the past/completive marker **i**. Examples:

**tula** 'to stir, scoop', **vinā** 'to enquire', **kā** 'to lift by hanging', **tā** 'to spread', **kuvi** 'to pile up', **ceri** 'to be dense/close', **muṭi** 'to tie up', **cī** 'to whittle, gather as a pile', **iṭu** 'to let out, express, drop, put down', **iru** 'to sit down, remain', **uru** 'to experience, attain', **poru** 'to stand up to, match', **miku** 'to abound', **vaku** 'to divide', **vaḷu** 'to slip', **veru** 'to shy from, shun', **tū** 'to spread', **ē** 'to command', **tai** 'to adorn, decorate', **niṇai** 'to think', **pō** 'to go', **vau** 'to grab.'

Type (iii): Stems which are non-monosyllabic and end with **u**. Here, the disyllabic stem has a long vowel and/or a closed syllable. These stems take the past/completive marker **i**. Examples:

**nalku** 'to provide', **añcu** 'to fear', **kaṭṭu** 'to bind', **vāṭu** 'to wilt, wither', **eḷutu** 'to write, paint', **tappu** 'to err; to wrong', **vimmu** 'to sob', **muṛru** 'to mature, come to a close', **iraiñcu** 'to bow, stoop', **viḷaiyāṭu** 'to play with peers.'

#### Stem-types Discerned from the Adverbial Participles Ending with **u**:

These stems are not different from the ones discussed above. Except for the stems referred to under Type (iii), all the other stem-types can derive

their adverbial participles in another way by taking the consonantal-type of past/completive marker **\*T** (**t**, **tt**, or **nt**) followed by the adverbial participle suffix **u**.<sup>3</sup> Hence the following classification, based on the past/completive marker they take and their morphophonemic behavior.<sup>4</sup>

Type (a): Stems ending with a consonant. Monosyllabic stems which end with **y** but contain a long vowel and those which end with **r** or **l** take the past/completive marker **nt**. Other monosyllabic stems take the past/completive marker (**t**)**t**. Disyllabic stems ending with **y**, **r**, or **l** take the past/completive marker **nt**. Other disyllabic stems take the past/completive marker **t**. Examples:

**kāṇ** 'to realize, see', **pūṇ** 'to put on, wear', **uṇ** 'eat, enjoy', **muraṇ** 'to oppose', **āy** 'to select', **māy** 'to lose luster, fade, wear out', **pey** 'to pour', **koy** 'to pick', **ār** 'to be full', **etir** 'to respond', **al** 'not to be \_\_', **il** 'to be non-existent', **kal** 'to learn, mature by experience', **kāl** 'to spurt', **cel** 'to leave (for a destination)', **nil** 'to stand up, be stable', **tāl** 'to lie low', **taval** 'to spread, diffuse', **irul** 'to darken', **mūl** 'to emerge', **kol** 'to draw toward self, take hold, receive, accept, grasp, grab, hook', **nīl** 'to extend', **vēl** 'to make a wish', **ān** 'to be content with', **īn** 'to give birth, release', **kavin** 'to adorn, be abundant.'

Type (b): Stems which end with a vowel. Here, the disyllabic stems ending with **u** are open and contain short vowels. Monosyllabic stems take the past/completive marker **tt** if they have an object,

<sup>3</sup> The **\*T** posited here can be considered as a convenient notation for the consonantal past-tense/completive aspect morpheme.

<sup>4</sup> See "The Past Stem" for the morphophonemic combinations of these stems with their respective past/completive markers.

and the marker **nt** if they do not have an object. Disyllabic stems ending with **i** and containing a closed syllable and/or a long vowel take the past/completive marker **tt**. Among other disyllabic stems, those which do not end with **u** take the past/completive marker **nt**. Those stems ending with **ai** take the past/completive marker **nt** and very rarely **tt**; those ending with **u** can be said to take the past marker **nt** or can be considered as going through stem mutation for making their past/completive stem. Examples:

**naṭa** 'to happen, walk', **vaṛa** 'to become dry', **kā** 'to guard, protect', **yā** 'to bind, put together', **teri** 'to surface, know', **cinti** 'to ponder, remember', **niṭṭi** 'to delay', **i** 'to bestow', **cī** 'to whittle, gather as a pile', **vī** 'to fall apart', **iṭu** 'to let out, express, drop, put down', **ulu** 'to plough', **tolu** 'to worship, bow', **naku** 'to smile, chuckle', **puku** 'to enter', **poru** 'to stand up to, match', **pū** 'to spread (like red blossoms)', **miku** 'to abound, be stirred up', **ce** 'to turn red', **ve** 'to steam up, boil', **kalai** 'be disarrayed', **niṇai** 'to ponder, think', **o** 'to be like, resemble', **no** 'to suffer internally', **kō** 'to hang with a string', **pō** 'to go.'

Type (c/iii): Stems which are non-monosyllabic and end with **u**. Here, the disyllabic stem has a long vowel and/or a closed syllable. These stems take the past/completive marker **i**. Examples:

**nalku** 'to provide', **añcu** 'to fear', **kaṭṭu** 'to bind', **vāṭu** 'to wilt, wither', **elutu** 'to write, paint', **tappu** 'to err; to wrong', **vimmu** 'to sob', **murru** 'to mature, come to a close', **iṛaiñcu** 'to bow, stoop', **viḷaiyāṭu** 'to play with peers.'

## THE COMPOUND VERB STEM

**GENERAL:** The stem which results from the combination of two independently meaningful stems, nominal or verbal, is here called a “compound stem.” The stem which serves as the base for another stem is the “basic/primary stem”; the stem which is added to the primary stem is the “secondary/sub stem.” “Stem<sub>1</sub> and Stem<sub>2</sub>” or “the first stem and the second stem” might be a better way to refer to these stems. The term “secondary” or “auxiliary,” in particular, seems to be a misnomer so far as classical Tamil is concerned, because this stem (i.e., the second) never seems to lose its individual semantic significance in the poems. On the contrary, it ‘enlivens/verbalizes’ the first stem when the latter is a nominal.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> If any, the problem might arise due to the difference between the original significance of these items in classical Tamil and their usage in modern Tamil. For example, the verb *vai* is understood in modern Tamil to mean ‘to put, place’ based on its various forms. In classical Tamil, it occurs in forms which ultimately yield its basic meaning as ‘to stay.’

Only when the marker **tt** is added to the root/stem **vai**, it attains the signification 'put, place.' In any case, **vai** 'to put' is considered as an "auxiliary" verb in modern Tamil when it occurs after an adverbial participle form. It is discussed as a "non-attitudinal" auxiliary verb, because of its apparent inability to express semantic concepts such as aspect, mood, voice, causation, or attitude when it occurs after an adverbial participle (cf. Lehmann:205, 225, 227).

If the "auxiliary" usage of **vai** in modern Tamil is used as a key to understand the usage of **vai** in similar structural contexts in classical Tamil, one might not be able to appreciate its original significance in classical Tamil. For example, consider **kaṇ akan cilampil paṭuttu vaittanna pārai maruṅkil eṭuttu niṟuttanna iṭṭarum ciṟu neṟi** (*malai:14-16*): 'very small narrow path (**iṭṭarum ciṟu neṟi**) that looks as if it was raised from the ground and made to stand up (**eṭuttu niṟuttanna**) near (**maruṅkil**) the rock which looks as if it was caused to fall down and made to stay there (**paṭuttu vaittanna**) on the spacious mountain (**kaṇ akan cilampil**).' Here, the verb **vai** follows the adverbial participle form **paṭuttu** < **paṭu** 'to fall.' Similarly, the verb **niṟu** follows the adverbial participle form **eṭuttu** < **eṭu** 'to take up.' One may be tempted to consider **vai** as an auxiliary verb in **paṭuttu vaittanna** because of the interpretation of **vai** in similar structural contexts in modern Tamil. However, one would soon realize that the interpretation of **vai** as a "non-attitudinal" auxiliary verb in modern Tamil would not help one in understanding the significance of **vai** in the classical Tamil form **paṭuttu vaittanna**. Another issue one may face is the structural similarity between **paṭuttu vaittanna** and **eṭuttu niṟuttanna**, because in both cases, a verb (**vai**, **niṟu**) follows an adverbial participle (**paṭuttu**, **eṭuttu**).

Perhaps one must look in the old traditional commentaries for the origins of the real "auxiliary" usage of Tamil verbs. The narrative style of the commentators might be very helpful in understanding the difference between classical Tamil and later Tamil. For example, one could see the true "auxiliary" usage of **vai** in Parimēlaḷakar's commentary on *pari.3:72*. Parimēlaḷakar interprets **piṟavā p piṟappu ilai piṟappittōr ilaiyē** (*pari.3:72*) as "**piṟavāp piṟappu uṭaiyai allai; aṇṇaṇam piṟantu vaittum piṟappittōrai uṭaiyai allai**." Here, the *paripāḷ* line under consideration is part of an invocation to the deity Māyōṇ (Vishnu), and basically means 'You have been born. Yet, there is no one who gave birth to you.' Alluding to the fact that there is no one who caused the deity to be born, the commentator says, "**aṇṇaṇam piṟantu vaittum**" which means 'even though you were born in that manner.' Here, the form **piṟantu vaittum** contains the verb **vai** occurring after an adverbial participle (**piṟantu** < **piṟa** 'to be born'). Since it does not have an object, **vaittu** 'putting?, placing?' here does not seem to function as a "main" verb. Consequently, one is inclined to give it an "auxiliary"

Therefore, the “compound verb stem” is taken in this study as an item composed of two classical Tamil stems: the first and the second. In this compound stem, the second is always a verb while the first can be nominal or verbal.

Some classical Tamil verbs have lost their basic significance over the centuries or have lost their function as primary stems: e.g., *iṭu* ‘to let out, express, lay down, drop, put down’, *ī* ‘to part with, give, provide, be compassionate’, and *koḷ* ‘to take hold, draw toward self, receive, accept, grasp, grab, hook.’ With the exception of *ī*, which has become obsolete, these and certain other verbs (*iru* ‘to remain, sit’, *viṭu* ‘to let go, let loose, release’) are construed as “auxiliary” verbs in modern Tamil when they serve as the second stem to the adverbial participle of a first stem. This chapter is about compound verb stems in classical Tamil.

**FORMATION:** The compound verb stems in classical Tamil are obtained by adding a verb stem to a nominal or a verbal. When the first stem is a nominal, the added second stem provides the significance of a verb to the first. When both are verbs, the first one provides the force of a verbal noun, when necessary. The second stem always retains its individual grammatical status as a verb.

Technically, it seems, any verb can “verbalize” the first stem if the latter is not already a verb. The most commonly used second stems which “verbalize” the first stem in classical Tamil are: *ā(r)* ‘to be full’, *uṇ* ‘to experience, enjoy, take in, consume’, *uru* ‘to experience, attain, feel’, *kiḷ* ‘to be able, be possible’, *kūr* ‘be abundant’, *koḷ* ‘to take hold, have

---

status. In fact, the form *piṛantum* ‘although (you have been) born’, without *vai*, would convey the same meaning as *piṛantu vaittum*. What *vai* seems to add in this context is a sense of conceding that is normally conveyed by “nevertheless” in English.

For different discussions of “auxiliary” verbs in modern Tamil, see *Auxiliaries in Dravidian* (1980) edited by Agesthalingom and Srinivasa Varma.

control of, put on, carry, draw toward self, accept, receive, grasp, grab, hook', **cīra** 'to excel, surpass', **cey** 'to make, do, perform', **taku** 'to be fit for, be ready, proper', **tar(u)** 'to bring (about)', **paṭu** 'to feel, experience, befall', **peru** 'to experience, obtain', and **var(u)** 'to come (about), be actualized, emerge, be visible, happen.'

The compound verb stem is conjugated like other verb stems. Affixes are added to the second member of the compound stem while the first member remains unchanged.

## EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: nominal/verbal stem + verb stem

### *Second Stem Structure and Example*

**ār** 'to be full'

(nominal first stem + **ār**)

cemmal nālavai **aṇṇāntu** pukutal (*pura*:54:3)  
 [**aṇṇāntu** < **aṇ(ṇu)** 'lifting, elevation' + **ā(r)ntu** 'being filled']  
 'entering the Noble One's royal court with (our) **head held high**'

(nominal first stem + **ār**)

ataṇ etir collēm ātalī **allāntu** kalaṅki (*kuri*:142-143)  
 [**allāntu** < **al** 'darkness, nothingness' + **ā(r)ntu**]  
 '(He was) agitated, **being full of oblivion**, since we did not reply (to his query) ...'

(nominal first stem + **ār**)

maṇam kavalpu iṇṇi **mālāntu** eḷuntu (*poru*:95)  
 [**mālāntu** < **māl** 'sober, fascination, temperate' + **ā(r)ntu**]  
 'waking up, **being temperate**, without confusion in mind'

**iṭu** ‘to let out, express, lay down, put down, drop’<sup>2</sup>

(nominal first stem + **iṭu**)

iralai ... **melkiṭu** kavuḷa (aka.34:4, 8)  
 [melkiṭu < melku ‘cud’ + iṭu ‘to let out, drop’]<sup>3</sup>  
 ‘deer whose mouths **let out the cud**’  
 ‘deer whose mouths **drop the cud**’

(nominal first stem + **iṭu**)

ikal iṭum paṇi (kali.134:12)  
 [ikaliṭu < ikal ‘hostility’ + iṭu ‘to express’]  
 ‘winter **which expresses hostility**’

(nominal first stem + **iṭu**)

eṇṇai ... muṇkai parri naliya t **terumantiṭṭu** aṇṇāy ivan oruvaṇ  
 ceytatu kāṇ eṇṇēṇ (kali.51:9-11)  
 [terumantiṭṭu < terumantu ‘bewilderment’ + iṭu ‘to let out, express’;  
 terumantu < \*terumar ‘bewildered’]  
 ‘As he grabbed and squeezed my hand, I **let out my bewilderment**  
 and cried “Mother look what he did.” ’

(verbal first stem + **iṭu**); The first stem retains its significance  
 as a verb.

polam paṭaiya mā **mayāṅkiṭa** (pura.359:14)

<sup>2</sup> The semantic range of classical Tamil **iṭu** is shared by **pōṭu** and **vai** in modern Tamil.

<sup>3</sup> Some might derive **melkiṭu** from **melki** advp of **mel** ‘to chew’ + **iṭu**. But the adverbial participle form of **mel** is **menru**. So, if the form under question was **menriṭa** (instead of **melkiṭa**), one can derive it from **menru** + **iṭa**. I have taken **melku** as the verbal noun derived from **mel** ‘to chew’ + **ku** verbal noun suffix.



[**mayañkiṭa**

< past/completive stem **mayañki** + **iṭa** infinitive of **iṭu** 'to drop';

**mayañki** past/completive stem < **mayañku** 'to crowd up']

'as the horses with golden ornaments **crowded up and dropped** (those ornaments)'

(verbal first stem + **iṭu**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

tun̄i nan̄i **kan̄riṭin̄** kāmam keṭūum

(*pari.6:97-98*)

[**kan̄riṭu** < past/completive stem **kan̄ri**

(< **kan̄ru** 'to ripen') + **iṭu** 'to let out, express']

'Passion will be destroyed, **if** sulking ripens well and **lets it out.**'

'Passion will be destroyed, **if** sulking ripens well and **is let out.**'

(verbal first stem + **iṭu**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

eṛi tir̄ai **tantiṭa** il̄inta m̄in̄

(*kali.121:20*)

[**tantiṭu** < past/completive stem **tant**

(< **tar** 'to bring') + **iṭu** 'to put down, drop.']

'the fish which came down (the shore) as the tossing waves **brought** and **put them down**'

**iru** 'continue to be, remain in an undisturbed state, stay, wait'<sup>4</sup>

(verbal first stem + **iru**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

tiru **v̄ir̄rirunta** t̄itu t̄ir̄ niyamattu

(*tiru:70*)

[**v̄ir̄riru** < past/completive stem **v̄ir̄r** + **iru** 'to stay';

<sup>4</sup> There are contexts where **iru** means 'to sit down', especially when it follows a nominal: e.g., v̄ēnkai **irunta** tōkai 'the peacock which was sitting on the v̄ēnkai tree' (*aink. 294:1*).

**vīrr** < **vīru** ‘to be grand, spread, puff up’]<sup>5</sup>  
 ‘flawless street (full of shops) where Prosperity reigns in grandeur’

(verbal first stem + **iru**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

māyinaṁ ... **iraikoṇṭiruntanna** nallārai k kaṇṭēṇ (kali.92:17, 19)  
**[iraikoṇṭiru** ‘continue to camp’

< past/completive stem **iraikoṇṭ** + **iru** ‘to remain, sit’;

**iraikoṇṭ** < **irai** ‘stay’ + **koṇṭ** past/completive stem

(< **koḷ** ‘to take on, have’)]

‘I saw lovely women who were like a group of peacocks **sitting around** (flocking).’

(verbal first stem + **iru**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

vāṇ ūr matiyam varai cēriṇ avvarai tēṇiṇ iṛāl eṇa ēṇi **ilaittirukkum**  
**kāṇ** akal nāṭaṇ (kali.39:8-10)

**[ilaittiru** < past/completive stem **ilaitt**

(< **ilai** ‘to fabricate, build’) + **iru** ‘to wait’]

‘the man from the wide forest country where the people **build a ladder and wait for the moon** thinking that it is a beehive, when it passes over the mountain (through the clouds)’

**ī** ‘to part with, provide, give, be compassionate’<sup>6</sup>

It is the most difficult of all the verbs to know the original significance of. It is always added to the first stem which is in its past/completive

<sup>5</sup> The stem **vīrr** can be considered as a mutated stem.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. tuyil **īyātu** ‘without providing sleep’ (pati.12:7).

form or to the first stem which is followed by the negative marker **āt**.

(verbal first stem + **ī**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

**ayarntīkam** viruntē (kali.32:19)

[**ayar** 'to celebrate'; **ī** 'to give, provide'; **īk** non-past stem

**ayarntīkam** < **ayarnt** past/completive stem + **īk** + **am** PNG]

'Let us **celebrate and give** to the unknown (guests).'

(verbal first stem + **ī**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

**irantīvāy** kēl īni (kali.59:9)

[**īra** 'to depart'; **ī** 'be compassionate'; **īv** non-past stem;

**irantīvāy** < **irant** past/completive stem + **īv** + **āy** PNG]

'O (woman) you are **being compassionate, going away** (from me). Listen now.'

(verbal first stem + **ī**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

**yānku c ceṇru īnku vantīttantāy** (kali.96:4)

[**vantīttantāy** < **vant** past/completive stem

(< **var** 'to come') + **īttantāy**

**īttantāy** < **ī** 'be compassionate' + **tantāy** 'you brought about']

'Where did you go and (have) **returned here to be compassionate?**'  
(Note that here the **ī** is followed by yet another secondary stem **tar** 'to bring about'.')

(verbal first stem + **ī**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

iruḷ vāṇam kaṭaḷ mukantu eṇ mēl uṛaiyoṭu **ninṛīyal** vēṇṭum  
(*kali.145:55-56*)

[**ninṛīyal** < **ninṛ** past/completive stem

(< **niḷ** 'to stay, stand') + **īyal** 'giving, providing']

'O dark sky, you must fetch sea water and **stand** over me and **give** raindrops.'

(bare verb stem + **āt** + **ī**)

ninṇ makaḷ ... pacalai kāma nōy eṇa c **ceppātimē** (*aka.52:13, 14-15*)

[**ceppu** 'to tell', reveal; **īmē** imperative]

'Please do not say, "Your daughter's paleness is (due to her) sickness of passion." '

**uṇ** 'to experience, take in, enjoy, eat'

(verbal stem + **uṇ**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

anṇāṇ col **nampuṇṭal** yārkkum iṅku aritu (*kali.47:10*)

[**nampuṇ** < **nampu** 'belief' + **uṇ** 'to experience, take']

'It is difficult for anyone to **take** his words in (good) **faith**.'

**uṛu** 'to experience, attain, feel'

(nominal first stem + **uṛu**)

tātu uṇ paṛavai **pētural** aṅci maṇi nā ārtta māṇ viṇai t tēraṇ  
(*aka.4:11-12*)

[**pēturu** < **pētu** 'bewilderment' + **uṛu** 'to experience, feel']

'the man on the chariot who tied up the bells fearing that the honey bees would **feel** **bewilderment**'

(nominal first stem + **uru**)

tāṇ **varutturīi** nam vayiṇ aṛiyātu ayaṁta aṇṇai (narr.273:3-4)

[**varutturu** < **varuttu** verbal noun

(< **varuntu** 'to suffer, grieve') + **uru** 'to experience']

'mother who **experienced grief** and had the frenzied dance (for the deity Murukaṇ) performed without knowing us'

(verbal first stem + **uru**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

eḥkurru iru vēru ākiya ... vaṇappu (aka.29:5, 6)

[**eḥkuru** < **eḥku** 'to pull, comb (cotton)' + **uru** 'to feel']

'beauty which became twofold **having felt the pull**'

**kil** 'to be able, be possible',<sup>7</sup>

(verbal first stem + **kil**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

nīṇaippatu oṇru **aṛikilē** varuntuval (kali.47:17)

[**aṛikil** < **aṛi** 'to know' + **kil** 'to be able']

'I suffer **without being able** to know what she thinks.'

(verbal first stem + (**k**)**kil**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

nāṇaṇum nīyūm vatuvaīyul paṇṭu aṛiyātīr pōl **paṭarkirpīr** maṇ kolō  
paṇṭu aṛiyātīr pōl paṭarntīr paḷam kēṇmai kaṇṭaṛiyātēṇ pōl  
**karakkirpenmaṇ** kolō (kali.39:37-40)

[**paṭarkir** < **paṭar** 'to move around, spread' + **kil** 'to be able';

**karakkir** < **kara** 'to conceal, hide' + (**k**)**kil** 'to be able']

<sup>7</sup> It could be a source of the modern present tense marker.

‘At your wedding will the Nāṭaṇ and you **be able to behave / conduct yourselves** as if you did not know each other in the past? **Will I be able to conceal** it as if I did not know about the previous friendship between you who behaved as though you did not know each other before?’

(verbal first stem + **kil**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

eṇ tōḷi aru maḷai taral vēṇṭiṇ **tarukir̥kum** perumaiyaḷē (*kali.39:5-6*)  
[**tarukir̥** < tar ‘to bring’ + **kil** ‘to be able’]  
‘If you ask (her) to bring down the rain, my friend has the greatness that is **capable of bringing** down the rain.’

(verbal first stem + **kil**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

tamiyarē **tuṇikir̥ral** peṇṭir̥kkum aritu (*kali.47:13*)  
[**tuṇikir̥** < tuṇi ‘to determine, dare’ + **kil** ‘to be able’]  
‘It is difficult for women too to **be able to determine** by themselves.’

**koḷ** ‘to take hold, take on, have control of, put on, carry, draw toward self, accept, receive, grasp, grab, hook’<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> In many contexts, **koḷ** is used in classical Tamil indicating the action of picking/hooking something or carrying something or putting something on oneself. Cf. kuppai-k-īrai ... iḷam taḷir **koytu koṇṭu** ‘picking the tender leaves of spinach and **carrying** it’ (*puṛa.159:9-10*); vēḷattu veṇ **kōṭu koṇṭu** ‘taking out and **carrying** the tusks of the elephant’ (*pati.30:11*); pēṭi **peṇ koṇṭu** āṭu kai ‘the (hairy) hands of the eunuch who has put on (the appearance of) a female’ or ‘the dancing of the eunuch who has put on (the appearance of) a female’ (*aka.206:2*). Also compare modern Tamil words **kokki** and **koṇṭi** which basically refer to a “hook.”

(verbal first stem + **koḷ**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

**niṇ eruttiṅkaṇ eṭuttukkoḷvatu pōlum ... vaṭu** (*kali.71:15-16*)

[**eṭuttukkoḷ** < advp **eṭuttu**

(< **eṭu** ‘to take out, raise’) + **koḷ** ‘to draw toward self’]

‘the scar which looks like it can be **taken / pulled out** of your nape’

(verbal first stem + **koḷ**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

**umaṇar pakaṭu teḷi teḷ viḷi neṭum perum kuṇṇrattu imiḷkoḷa iyampum**

(*aka.17:13-14*)

[**imiḷkoḷ** < **imiḷ** ‘to roar, roaring’ + **koḷ** ‘to receive, attain’]

‘The clear call of the salt merchants, who drive their bullocks, sounds so as to **roar** at the big tall mountain.’

(verbal first stem + **koḷ**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

**kōṭu ēntu oruttal āru kaṭikoḷḷum arum curam** (*aka.65:16-17*)

[**kaṭikoḷ** < **kaṭi** ‘to guard, guarding’ + **koḷ** ‘to take hold’]

‘the difficult forest where the bull elephant with high tusks has **taken on the guarding** of the path’

---

In modern Tamil, the verb **koḷ** is usually considered as indicating an action done to or for the benefit of the doer, and therefore in modern analyses of Tamil, is referred to as a “middle” verb when it follows an adverbial participle. Note that **koḷ** added to an adverbial participle provides the sense ‘accept, have control of’ in modern Tamil too, even when not necessarily indicating an action done for the benefit of the doer. Compare talaivar kuṇṇavāḷiyai **mannittār** ‘The head (of the government) **pardoned** the criminal’ vs. (eṇṇai) **mannittu-k-koḷḷuṅkaḷ** ‘Please **forgive (and accept)** me.’ Similarly, avaḷ kuḷantaiyai p **pārttukkoṇṭāḷ** ‘She **took care** of the baby.’

(verbal first stem + **koḷ**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

**annai kaṭikoṇṭaṇaḷē tōḷi** (aka.20:12-13)  
 [kaṭikoḷ < kaṭi 'to guard, guarding' + koḷ 'to take hold, take on']  
 'Mother has **taken on the guarding** (of me), my friend.'

**cira** 'to excel, surpass'

(verbal first stem + **cira**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

**venṇiyoṭu maḷicirantu pōr val ilaiyar tāḷ valam vāḷtta** (aka.74:1-2)  
 [maḷicira < maḷi 'to rejoice' + cira 'to excel']  
 'as the young men skilled in warfare **excelled in joy** because of their victory and praised the success of (the king's) effort'

**cey** 'to make, do, perform'

(nominal first stem + **cey**)

**kātalceytu aruḷātu tuṇantār**<sup>9</sup> (kali.122:3)  
 [kātalcey < kātal 'love' + cey 'to do, make']  
 'he who **showed love** and left without showing mercy'

**taku** 'to be fit for, suit, be proper'

(nominal first stem + **taku**)

**paintaḷai taii aṇittaka pal pūṇkāṇal alkiṇam varutal** (aka.20:9-10)  
 [aṇittaka < aṇi 'dress, garment' + taka  
 (< taku 'to be fit for, to suit')]

<sup>9</sup> Compare **kātalittu** (kali.96:18), where **kāтали** 'to love' is a verb.



‘wearing green leaves (for skirt) and staying around **accordingly** in groves with many flowers’

(verbal first stem + **taku**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

**teritaku** vaṇappin (aka.29:6)  
 [teritaku < teri ‘be visible’ + taku ‘to be fit’]  
 ‘with beauty **fit for being visible**’

(verbal first stem + **taku**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

iḷamaiyum kāmamum ōrāṅku p peṛṛār vaḷamai **viḷaitakkatu** uṇṭō  
(kali.18:7-8)

[**viḷaitakkatu** ‘that which is proper to be desired’

< **viḷai** ‘to desire’ + **takkatu** ‘that which is proper/appropriate’]

‘Is there anything **proper** in the riches **to be desired** by those people who have both youth and passion?’

‘Is there anything proper in the riches that is to be desired by people who are both young and passionate?’

(verbal first stem + **taku**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

ven curam taṇiyē iṟappa yāṇ oḷintu iruttal **nakutakkaṇru** ivvaḷuṅkal  
 ūrkē (kali.23:3-5)

[**nakutakkaṇru** < naku ‘to laugh’ + **takkaṇru** ‘is fit for’]

‘My staying here, being left behind all alone as he left through the forest, is (a matter) **fit for laughter** in this noisy town.’

**tar(u)** ‘to bring (about), trigger, emerge’

(verbal first stem + **tar**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

ētilāṇ paṭai pōla **iruttantatu** iḷavēṇil (kali.27:8)

[**iruttantatu** ‘it has brought a deep rooted stay’

< **iru** ‘to be set or rooted in’ + **tantatu** (< **tar** ‘to bring about’)]

‘Spring has brought about a stay like a stranger’s weapon.’

‘Spring has arrived like a stranger’s weapon (for those who are lonely).’

(verbal first stem + **tar**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

eṇ makan vayiṇ **peyartantēṇē** (aka.26:20, 21)

[**peyartantēṇē** ‘I brought about a move’

< **peyar** ‘to move’ + **tantēṇē** (< **tar** ‘to bring about’)]

‘I moved toward my son.’

(verbal first stem + **tar**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

kal eṇ cummaiyar ṇērēr eṇa p **pukutantu** (aka.86:18)

[**pukutantu** ‘bringing about an entrance’

< **puku** ‘to enter’ + **tantu** (< **tar** ‘to bring about’)]

‘those (women) making a roaring noise made a sudden entrance and ...’

(verbal first stem + **tar**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

pular viṭiyaliṇ virumpi p **pōttantu** taḷaiyum tārum tantanaṇ ivan  
(*narr.80:4-5*)

[**pōttantu** 'bringing about an entrance' < \***pō** + **tar(u)**

< \***puku** 'to enter, entering' + **tar** 'to bring about']

'He arrived with joy in the early hours of dawn and gave me leaves (for my skirt) and a garland.'

(Note that **puku** 'to enter' has lost its intervocalic **k** and then the vowel **u** in its first syllable is lengthened to **ō** in compensation.)

(verbal first stem + **tar**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

avar namakku iṇ uyir **pōttarum** maruttuvar āyiṇ (*kali.137:24-25*)  
[**pōttarum** 'one who brings about an entrance';

see previous example.]

'if he is a physician who would bring back our (hon.) sweet life, ...'

(verbal first stem + **tar**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

villan ... yātō marṛu am mā tiram paṭar eṇa viṇavi **nirrantōṇē**  
(*aka.48:12, 13-14*)

[**nirrantōṇē** 'he who brought about a standing'

< **nil** 'to stand, standing' + **tantōṇē** (< **tar** 'to bring about']

'The bow-man asked where that animal went and stood (up there).'

(verbal first stem + **tar**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

pallōr uvanta uvakai ellām eṇṇuḷ **peytantarṛē** (*aka.42:11-12*)

[**peytantar̥ru** 'it is/was like bringing about a pour'

< **pey** 'to pour' + **tantar̥ru** 'it is like bringing'

**tantar̥ru** < **tant** past/completive stem of **tar** 'to bring' + **ar̥ru** 'it is like']

'It was like **bringing a downpour** of the total joy of many people into my self.'

(verbal first stem + **tar**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

mēvār **viṭuttanta** kūntal kutirai (kali.103:53)

[**viṭuttanta** 'that which was let loose'

< **viṭu** 'to let go' + **tanta** adjp of **tar** 'to bring about']

'the horse with tresses **which** the unfriendly people **let loose**'

**paṭu** 'to feel, experience, suffer, befall'

(nominal first stem + **paṭu**)

ciraṇtāṇai **valipaṭi** c ceṇṇaṇaḷ (kali.9:23)

[**valipaṭu** < **vali** 'path' + **paṭu** 'to befall, following in the path']

'She left (us) **following the path** of the eminent one (her lover).'

(verbal first stem + **paṭu**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

paṇai ... **atirpaṭṭu** muḷaṅki (pati.39:5, 6)

[**atirpaṭṭu** 'having felt the vibration'

< **atir** 'to vibrate' + **paṭu** 'to feel']

'the drums **vibrated** and roared, and ...'

(verbal first stem + **paṭu**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

nāvoṭu navilā **nakai paṭu** tiñcol ... putalvan (aka.16:4, 5)

[**nakaipaṭu**

< **naku** 'to smile, chuckle, laughter' + **paṭu** 'to experience, suffer']  
 'his son who speaks unpracticed sweet words which **suffer laughter**'  
 'his son who speaks unpracticed sweet words which invites laughter'

**peru** 'to experience, obtain'

(nominal first stem + **peru**); The first stem is a verbal noun.

ālpavar kalakkuṟa **alaiperra** nāṭu (kali.5:12)

[**alaiperra** 'that which experienced shaking'

< **alai** 'shaking' + **peru** 'to experience']  
 'the country **which was shaken** as its rulers experienced agitation'

**var(u)** 'to come (about), be actualized, emerge, be visible, happen'

(verbal first stem + **var**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

taṇ tamil āyvantilār (pari.9:25)

[**āy** 'to investigate, select';

**āyvantilār** < **āy** + **vantilār** 'those who have not come close'

**vantilār** < **vant** past/completive stem (< **var** 'to come')

+ **il** negative + **ār** PNG]

'those **who have not come close to an investigation** of pleasant Tamil'

'those who have not performed an investigation of pleasant Tamil'

(verbal first stem + **var**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

toṭi k kai **taivara** t tōyntaṇṇu kollō (aka.9:23)

[**taivara** ‘as it caressed’]

< **tai** ‘to join, weave as a wreath’ + **vara** infinitive of **var**]

‘Did it (my heart) immerse (in her) **as** her hand wearing bangles came close to caressing?’

‘Did it (my heart) immerse (in her) as she caressed it with her hand wearing bangles?’

(verbal first stem + **var**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

muyakkam avarum peṛukuvar maṇṇē **nayavara** (aka.11:10-11)

[**nayavara** < **naya** ‘to long for’ + **vara** infinitive of **var** ‘to emerge’]

‘He too would get (my) embrace **as / when** (our) longing finds its expression.’

(verbal first stem + **var**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

niṇ mel iyal **mēvanta** cīraṭi (kali.13:10-11)

[**mēvanta** < **mē** ‘to spread’ + **vanta** adjp of **var** ‘to emerge’]

‘your small feet **in which** your gentle quality surfaces’

(verbal first stem + **var**); The first stem has the force of a verbal noun.

maṇi oḷirvaruṁ ara v uṛaḷ āram (pura.398:27)

[**oḷirvarum** < **oḷir** ‘to glitter, glittering’ + **varum** adjp of **var** ‘to emerge, surface’]

‘a snake-like necklace in which the **glittering** of the gems is **visible**’

**viṭu** ‘to let go, let loose, release, split’<sup>10</sup>

(verbal first stem + **viṭu**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

nin̄ tōḷ mēl ām īram āy **viṭṭana** pun̄ (kali.95:17-18)

[āy**viṭu** < advp āy (< ā ‘to be’) + **viṭu** ‘to split, release’;

īram ‘moisture’]

‘the wound (of sulking) split open as / **turned into moisture** that is on your shoulders/arms’

(verbal first stem + **viṭu**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

naṛunutal nalkāl kaṇ **māriṇiṭin** (kali.61:23-24)

[**māriṇiṭu** < advp **māri** (< **māru** ‘to change’) + **viṭu** ‘to let go’]

‘if the woman with good-smelling forehead **changes** her attitude **and lets** (me) **go** without showing kindness’

‘if the woman with good-smelling forehead does not show kindness, changes her attitude, and lets (me) go’

(verbal first stem + **viṭu**); The first stem retains its significance as a verb.

avan̄ tannoṭu **ninruviṭu** (kali.63:16-17)

[**ninruviṭu** < advp **ninru** (< **nil** ‘to stay’) + **viṭu** ‘to let go’]

‘**stay** with him and **let** (other things) **go**’

<sup>10</sup> Cf. vēntu **viṭṭananē** ‘The king also **let us go**’ (aink.483:2); emmai ... vilakkiya ellā nī ... **viṭu** ‘O you who blocked my way, **let me go**.’ (kali.116:3-4).

## THE CAUSATIVE STEM

**GENERAL:** The causative stem tells us that the action denoted by the verb root is “made to happen.” The person/thing who/which experiences the action denoted by the causative stem is different from the agent/doer of the action. This type of stem is conjugated like other verb stems.

It is impossible to have a neat dichotomy as with causative/transitive verbs vs. non-causative/intransitive verbs so far as classical Tamil is concerned. It is perhaps better to make a distinction between non-causative and transitive verbs, because non-causative verbs can be transitive or intransitive, while transitive verbs can be causative/effective or non-causative/affective.<sup>1</sup>

**FORMATION:** The causative stem is derived in the following ways:

- (i) by using the bare verb stem;

---

<sup>1</sup> For issues on the causatives/transitives, see K. Paramasivam (1979) and Schiffman (IJDL, vol. V, No. 2:238-248).



- (ii) by stem mutation or mutation of the consonantal type of the past/completive marker that is added to the stem;<sup>2</sup>
- (iii) by suffixation: adding **tt**, **(p)pi**, or **vi** to the verb stem;
- (iv) by periphrasis: the verb **cey** ‘to do’, **paṇṇu** ‘to make’, or **vai** ‘to stay, remain’ follows the infinitive form ending with **a** of the verb to be “causativized.”

### EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: using bare verb stem

vēntarai ... tākki muracamoṭu oruṅku **akappaṭēṇ** āyiṇ ... kuṭi paḷi  
tūrṛum kōlēṇ ākuka (*puṛa.72:7-9, 12*)

[**akappaṭu** ‘to be caught’ < **akam** ‘inside’ + **paṭu** ‘to befall’;

**akappaṭēṇ** ‘I will not cause \_\_\_ to be caught’

< **akappaṭu** + **ēṇ** PNG.

When a PNG beginning with a long vowel is added to the stem, a negative finite verb is derived. It is conceivable that the elongation of the stem-initial vowel of the suffix here indicates causativity.]

‘May I become a tyrant despised by my subjects if I do not attack (enemy) kings and **cause them to be caught** along with their royal drums!’

yaṇ avaṇ ... variṇē cuṭaroṭu tiritaru neruṅci pōla eṇṇoṭu **tiriyēṇ** āyiṇ  
(*aka.336:17-19*)

[**tiri** ‘to twist, whirl’]

---

<sup>2</sup> See “Morphophonemics” for a discussion of stem mutation.

‘(When and) if he comes, if **I do not twist** him like the **neruñci** flower which turns around with the sun, ...’

kaḷiṟu avara kāppu uṭaiya kayam paṭiyiṇai (pura.15:9-10)

[paṭi ‘making \_\_ immerse’

< paṭu ‘to lie down, fall’ + i (past/completive marker)]

‘You **made** (your) elephants **get down** into their guarded ponds.’

uppai māṛi veṇṇel tariya uppu viḷai kaḷaṇi c cenṇaṇaḷ<sup>3</sup>

(kuru.269:5-6)

[māṛi ‘exchanging, having exchanged’

< māṟu ‘to change’ + i (past/completive marker)]

‘She went to the field where salt is grown in order to (get and later) **exchange** (that) salt and bring white paddy.’

(Note that the object of **māṛi** is overtly marked with the case marker **ai**: **uppai** < **uppu** ‘salt’ + **ai**)

kaḷiṇkam ... uṭi<sup>4</sup>

(peru:469, 470)

[uṭi ‘making \_\_ wear’ < uṭu ‘to wear’ + i (past/completive marker)]

‘**making me wear** fine clothing’

<sup>3</sup> In modern Tamil, the causative/effecive form of **māṛi** is **māṛri** or **māṛa vaittu**, so one would say uppai **māṛri** ‘changing the salt.’

<sup>4</sup> In this one and similar forms, the **i** has been identified as a “causative-producer.” For further information, see P.S. Subrahmanyam (1971:10).

Formation mechanism:

stem mutation or mutation of the past/completive marker

- (a) In consonant-final stems, the stem-final consonant is hardened if it is not **y**, **r**, or **v**. And the short vowel in the monosyllabic stem is lengthened<sup>5</sup>:

ānā viruppiṇ tāṇ ... ūṭṭi (peru:479)

[ūṭṭ < uṇ ‘to eat, enjoy, consume’]

‘He fed us showing endless affection and ...’

taṇ mārpū tuṇai āka t tuyiṛṛuka (aka:35:12, 13)

[tuyiṛṛ < tuyil ‘to sleep’]

‘May he make her sleep with his chest as support.’

cura mutal varuttam mara mutal vīṭṭi (aka:301:9)

[vīṭ ‘to fall, perish’]

‘destroying/making the grief caused by the forest perish at the tree’

‘making the distress due to walking in the forest disappear by resting under the tree’

---

<sup>5</sup> These are stems from Type (i) discussed in “Stem Classification on a Phonological Basis.” Those who may not want to consider the process described here as “stem mutation,” can say that the past/completive marker in these cases is **t** (e.g., **uṇ** + **t** > **uṇṭ**) and that the causative stems are obtained by simply hardening the past marker (e.g., **uṇṭ** > **ūṭṭ**).

In any case, these causative stems take the adverbial participle suffix **i** while their non-causative counterparts take the adverbial participle suffix **i** or **u** (e.g., **ūṭṭi** (peru:479) vs. **uṇṭi** (aink.268:2) or **uṇṭu** (poru:88)).

Note that the non-past/non-completive marker for the non-causative stems in this group is nothing, **k**, **t**, **n**, **p**, or **v**: e.g., **payilum** (aka.344:6); **uṇkum** (aka.133:11); **kāṇṭum** (pura.173:9); **uṇṇunar** (aka.2:2); **uṇṇar** (narr.355:7); **payilvuṛru** (peru:195). The non-past/non-completive marker for the causative stems is nothing, **k**, **t**, **n**, or **v**: e.g., **payiṛṛum** (peru:300); **ūṭṭutum** (pari.8:80); **ūṭṭuvāḷ** (pari.21:26).

kaṇal muṛai **mūṭṭi** (pari.2:63)  
 [mūṭṭ < mūl 'to emerge, start']  
 'starting the (sacrificial) fire in the conventional manner'

nel kavaḷam **tīṛri** (puṛa.337:14)  
 [tīṛr < tin 'to eat, munch']  
 'making (the elephants) eat the morsel of rice'

- (b) Stems here are non-monosyllabic and end with **u**. The disyllabic stem has a long vowel and/or a closed syllable. The last consonant is hardened/doubled in stems with open syllables; and the closing consonant in the penultimate syllable is hardened in stems which have a closed syllable.<sup>6</sup>

kāṭu koṇṛu nāṭu **ākki** k kuḷam toṭṭu vaḷam **perukki** (paṭṭ:283-284)  
 [ākk < āku 'to become' ; perukk < peruku 'to multiply']  
 'tilling the forest and making it become an agricultural land; digging the ponds and causing the bounty to multiply'

naṭukal pīli **cūṭṭi** (aka.35:8)  
 [cūṭṭ < cūṭu 'to wear']  
 'making the hero-stone wear the peacock feather'  
 'putting the peacock feather on the hero-stone'

<sup>6</sup> These are stems referred to as Type (iii) discussed in "Stem Classification on a Phonological Basis." These stems, whether causative/effective or not, take the adverbial participle suffix **i** which is the same as their past/completive marker. Also note that their non-past/non-completive marker is nothing, **k**, **t**, **n**, **p**, or **v**: e.g., **cūṭṭum** (aka.156:1); **muyaṅkukam** (aka.47:19); **varuntutum** (narr.103:9); **cūṭunar** (narr.278:4); **vāṅkunaḷ** (kuṛu.229:2); **vākkunar** (pari.10:75); **varuntupa** (aka.216:16); **varuntuvar** (narr.41:5); **cūṭṭuvan** (puṛa.319:15).

ēru eṇru ēṛri (poru:167)

[ēṛr < ēru ‘to climb up’]

‘saying “Get on” and **making** (you) **climb** on the chariot’

aṭaṅkā maṇṇarai aṭakkum ... nāṭu kiḷavōyē (pura.200:16, 17)

[aṭakk < aṭaṅku ‘to be submissive, contained’]

‘O king of the country who **makes** stubborn kings **submit** to you.’

vēmpu mutal taṭintu muracu ceya muracci (pati.44:15-16)

[muracc < muraṅcu ‘to become lumpy’]

‘cutting down the base of (the enemy king’s) vēmpu tree and **lumping** it for making drums’

pēraṇar uṇuviyai varuttāṭimē (narr.193:9)

[varutt < varuntu ‘to be distressed, grieve’]

‘Please **do not make** her **suffer** who is already in great distress.’

ciṛu tiṇai p paṭu pul ōppi el paṭa varutiyar (kuri:38-39)

[ōpp < ōmp(u) ‘to recede, retreat, shield oneself from’]

‘**Make** the birds which come down on the small millet plants **retreat** and you return (home) as the sun goes down.’

muṇuval tōṛri ... malar uṇkaṇ putaittu (narr.370:10, 11)

[tōṛr < tōṇru ‘to appear’]

‘**making** a smile **appear** (on her face) and concealing/covering (her) flower-like attractive eyes’

- (c) In certain vowel final stems and certain consonant-final stems, the past/completive marker **nt** is hardened to result in **tt** which provides the causative sense. These vowel-final stems are disyllabic and open

with short syllables. Consonant-final stems are monosyllabic or disyllabic but end with **y**, **r**, or **l**<sup>7</sup>:

maṭa p piṭi kaṇṭu vaya k kari māl uṛṛu **naṭatta** naṭavātu nirpa  
(*pari.10.42-43*)

[**naṭatt** < **naṭa** 'to walk' + **tt**]

'In spite of being **urged to walk**, the strong male elephant stood still, looking at a female elephant and feeling intoxicated, and ...'

mati nōkki alar **vītta** āmpal vāṇ malar (kālī.72:6)

[**vītt** < **vī** 'to unfold, fall down' + **tt**]

'the big āmpal flower which looked at the moon and **opened down/unfolded** its petals'

cēma t tirai **vīlttu** (*pari.10:34*)

[**vīltt** < **vīl** 'to fall, roll down' + **tt**]

'**making** the curtain (around the bed) **come/roll down**'

<sup>7</sup> These are selective stems from Type (i) and all the stems from Type (ii) discussed in "Stem Classification on a Phonological Basis." The stems from Type (i) end with **y**, **r**, or **l**. As it becomes known from here, the past/completive marker in this group of non-causative stems is **nt** and **tt** in causative stems.

The non-causative stems in this group invariably take the adverbial participle suffix **u** (e.g., **uyarntu**) as do most of their causative counterparts (e.g., **uyarrtu** 'having raised'); some of these causative stems take the adverbial participle suffix **i** (e.g., **ārtti** 'making — full/enjoy'; **cērtti** 'making — join — ') in this period.

Also note that the non-causative stems in this group have no overt non-past/non-completive marker or have **k**, **t**, **n**, **p**, or **v**: **uyarum** (*kālī.129:1*); **taṇikuvaḷ** (*aka.22:6*); **kaluḷti** (*kālī.91:12*); **ārna** (*pati.13:6*); **cārpavaṇ** (*kālī.104:25*); **ōyvana** (*kuru.383:4*). The causative stems take the non-past/non-completive marker **kk**, **tt**, or **pp**: e.g., **uyarkkuvai** (*matu.131*); **taṇikkum** (*kālī.81:18*); **aṇitta** (*pari.18:49*); **iruttum** (*aka.377:8*); **taṇippa** (*kālī.78:8*).

perravai piṛar piṛarkku ārtti (peru:174)  
 [ārtt < ār 'to be full' + tt]  
 'making others be filled with what he obtained'  
 'making others enjoy what he obtained'

talai p puṇarttu acaitta paṇṛokai k kala p paiyar (aka.301:22)  
 [puṇartt 'to make \_\_ join' < puṇar 'to join' + tt]  
 'people with bags of numerous instruments which they put on their  
 heads and tied'

Formation mechanism: suffixation; stem + tt/(p)pi/vi

### Marker Structure and Example

**tt**: Mostly, disyllabic stems which are open and end with **u** take this marker. The consonant preceding the stem-final **u** is invariably **k**, **ṭ**, **p**, or **r**.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Rarely, monosyllabic stems like **vai** 'to remain, stay' and **koḷ** 'to take, receive' take this marker, and an enunciative **u** is added to the consonant-final stem preceding the causative marker: e.g., **vaittu** (aka.265:13); **koḷuttāmal** (pari.11:126); **akkuḷuttu?** (kali.94:20).

Note that the non-causative stems in this group make their past/completive stem by mutation and that their adverbial participle suffix is **u**: **puku** 'to enter' > **pukku** 'having entered'; **paṭu** 'to experience' > **paṭṭu** 'having experienced'; **uṛu** 'to feel, attain' > **uṛṛu** 'having felt/attained.' The causative marker **tt** serves as the past/completive marker or vice versa in causative stems. The adverbial participle suffix for the causative stems is **u**: e.g., **pukuttu** (kali.38:4). Note that this adverbial participle form changes in modern Tamil as **pukutti** 'making ... enter.'

Also note that the non-past/non-completive marker for the non-causative stems here is nothing, **k**, **t**, **n**, **p**, or **v**: e.g., **pukum** (kuru.139:3); **paṭukam** (kali.64:9); **vaika** (kuru.285:1); **vaikum** (narr.47:5); **uṛutum** (aka.18:13); **pukuta** (pari.22:11); **paṭunar** (narr.240:8); **pukupa** (pura.177:4); **pukuvaḷ** (pura.293:5). The non-past/non-completive marker for the causative stems is nothing, **kk**, or **pp**: e.g., **vaiiya** (narr.12:6); **toṭiyya** (aka.394:11); **uṛukkum** (pati.76:4); **tapukkum** (pati.51:27); **paṭukkuvaḷ** (aka.60:15);

(stem + tt)

maṇṇuruttu t tuvara muṭitta tukaḷ aṟu mucchi (tiru:25-26)

[maṇṇurutt < maṇ(ṇu) 'to wash' + uru 'to experience' + tt]<sup>9</sup>'dirtless hair which **was washed** and tied up as it dried'

(p)pi: Vowel-final stems here are open, disyllabic, and do not end with u.  
 In consonant-final stems, the final consonant is r, l, or ḷ among which, r and l are preceded by a long vowel.<sup>10</sup>

(stem + ppi)

oṇṇutal pacappittōrē (aink.67:5)

[pacappi 'to cause lovesick pallor'

&lt; paca 'to have lovesick pallor' + ppi]

'those (women) whose bright foreheads you **caused to have** (lovesick) pallor'

neytal parappil pāvai kiṭappi niṇ kuṟi vantaṇē (kuru.114:1-2)

[kiṭappi 'to lay' &lt; kiṭa 'to lie still' + ppi]

'I came for a rendezvous with you after **laying** down my doll in the neytal bush'

viṭukkum (narr.35:6); vaikkum (puṛa.190:2); paṭuppavar (kali.9:12).

<sup>9</sup> See "The Compound Verb Stem" for the use of uru as a second stem in such contexts.<sup>10</sup> Non-causative stems here take the past/completive marker (n)t and the adverbial participle suffix u, while their causative counterparts take the past/completive marker tt or i and the adverbial participle suffix u or i.

Also note that nothing, (k)k, (t)t, n, (p)p, or v is the non-past/non-completive marker for the non-causative stems here: e.g., tālum (kali.67:17); kiṭakkum (kuru.343:6); kiṭatti (puṛa.72:5); taṇiti (puṛa.10:6); cērunar (puṛa.361:10); kiṭappa (kali.104:53); koṭpa (aink.192:1); cērvār (pari.5:78). The causative stems take the non-past/non-completive marker (k)k or (p)p: e.g., uyarkkuvai (matu.131); viḷkkum (puṛa.104:3); tālppikkum (pari.6:75); cērppa (aka.80:3); ayaṛppiya (kali.120:12).



(The **i** in the causative suffix **ppi** and the past/completive marker **i** result in just one **i**: **kiṭappi + i > kiṭappi**.)

eṇ ciṟuvaṇai k kāl kaḷi kaṭṭilil kiṭappi t tū veḷ aṟuvai **pōrppittilāṭē**  
(*pura.286:3-5*)

[**pōr** ‘to cover oneself’; **pōrppi** ‘to cover \_\_’  
‘Alas! It (the gratitude owed to his chief) did not lay my young boy on the stretcher (for corpses) and **cover** him with a pure white cloth.’

aruku pati āka ampiyil **tālppikkum** ... vaiyai (*pari.6:75, 77*)  
[**tālppi** ‘to cause to delay’ < **tāl** ‘to delay, procrastinate’ + **ppi**]  
‘Although our town is close (to your town), the river Vaiyai **causes you to delay** by means of the raft.’

(stem + **pi**)

vaḷai **koṭpittāṇ** (*kali.145:57*)  
[**koṭpi** < **koḷ** ‘to spin, whirl’ + **pi**]  
‘He **made** (my) bangles **whirl**.’  
‘He **made** my bangles become **loose**.’  
‘He caused lovesickness in me.’

**vi**: Vowel-final stems here are open, disyllabic, and do not normally end with **a**. In consonant-final stems, the final consonant is **r**, **l**, or **ḷ** among which, **r** and **ḷ** are preceded by a long vowel. An enunciative **u** is added to the stem-final consonant when the stem is monosyllabic.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Non-causative stems here take the past/completive marker (n)t or i and the adverbial participle suffix u or i, while their causative counterparts take the past/completive marker tt or i and the adverbial participle suffix u or i.

(stem + vi)

**aṛivippēm kol aṛiviyēm kol eṇa iru pāl paṭṭa cūlcci** (*aka.52:10-11*)

[**aṛivi** ‘to let know, inform’ < **aṛi** ‘to know’ + **vi**]

‘twofold deliberation wondering whether to **let** (my mother) **know** or **let not know** (about my love with a man)’

**arukuvittu oruvarai akaṛṛaliṇ ... payaṇ iṇṇu ... kāmam**

(*kali.142:2, 5*)

[**arukuvi** < **aruku** ‘to get close’ + **vi**]

‘Passion is not useful since it pushes away people **having caused** them to **get close**.’

**aṛivar uṛuviya allal**

(*aka.98:26*)

[**uṛuvi** ‘to cause to experience’ < **uṛu** ‘to experience’ + **vi**]

‘the agony **which** the wise man **caused** (me) to **experience**’

**kātalaṇ nal ēṛ eḷil ākam cērvittal eñṇāṇṇum vallatāl vaiyai p puṇal**

(*pari.12:73-75*)

[**cēr** ‘to join’; **cērvittal** ‘to make join’]

‘The Vaiyai water is always capable of **making** (the woman) **join** her lover’s lovely handsome chest.’

---

Also note that nothing, **k**, **t**, **n**, **p**, or **v** is the non-past/non-completive marker for these non-causative stems: e.g., **aṛiyum** (*aka.195:14*); **aṛikuvar** (*puṛa.61:15*); **cērkam** (*puṛa.255:6*); **aṛitum** (*kuṛu.40:3*); **aṛinai** (*puṛa.381:20*); **aṛipavar** (*kali.125:3*); **aṛival** (*aka.388:21*). The causative stems take the non-past/non-completive marker **kk**, **tt**, or **pp**: e.g., **uṛukkum** (*aka.216:4*); **uṛutta** (*aka.224:12*); **aṛivippēm** (*aka.52:10*).

makalir cuṭar talai k koḷuvi (kuri:224)  
 [koḷuvi < koḷ 'to take hold, receive' + u enunciative + vi]<sup>12</sup>  
 'women **made** (the lamp) **receive** the flame on its head'  
 'women lit the lamps'

Formation mechanism: infinitive in a + cey/pañṇu/vai

### *Structure and Example*

**cey** 'to do'

(infinitive + cey)

vāḷa c ceyta nalviṇai allatu ālum kālai p puṇai piṇitu illai  
(pura.367:10-11)

[vāḷa infinitive < vāl 'to live, prosper, thrive' + a]  
 'At the time when one is lying low, there is no other raft (as  
 life-support) except the good actions **which made one thrive.**'

**pañṇu** 'to make'

(infinitive + pañṇu)

vēntarai ... uṇaṅka p pañṇi (pura.25:5, 6)  
 [uṇaṅka infinitive < uṇaṅku 'to dry up, wither, lose life' + a]  
 'making the (enemy) kings **wither**'

---

<sup>12</sup> Some might derive koḷuvi from koḷuvu + i.

**vai** 'to remain',<sup>13</sup>

(infinitive + **vai**)

arum kalam tantu ... neṭu nakar **nīraiya vaitta** niṇ munṇōr  
(*puṛa.198:15-17*)

[**nīraiya** infinitive < **nīrai** 'to fill up' + glide **y** + **a**]

'your ancestors who brought precious jewelry and **made** their vast city fill with it'

---

<sup>13</sup> Some may wonder about the meaning given here for **vai** 'to remain' because in modern Tamil, it is understood as 'to put, place carefully.' However, classical Tamil contexts like **vaikiya** 'that which remained' (*kuṛu.9:2*), as opposed to **vaitta** which is illustrated in the present example, suggest that the **tt** in **vaitta** brings a causative/effective sense. Nevertheless, many people may expect the form **vaiku** instead of **vai** to mean 'to stay, remain' in classical Tamil. I take the **ku** in **vaiku** to be a formative suffix.

## THE PASSIVE STEM

**GENERAL:** The passive voice represents the subject as acted upon.<sup>1</sup> It gives a sense 'allow oneself to', 'get oneself verb(ed/en)', etc. The stem which expresses the "passive voice" is here called the "passive stem." The passive stem is conjugated like the compound verb stem.

**FORMATION:** The signification of the passive voice is expressed in a variety of ways. The passive stem is derived in the following ways:

---

<sup>1</sup> See *Greek Grammar*, Smyth (1972:394). Caldwell (1875, reprint 1976:465, 469) notes: "None of the Dravidian dialects possesses any passive particle or suffix, or any means of expressing passivity by direct inflectional change; the signification of the passive voice is, nevertheless, capable of being expressed in a variety of ways.

"The Dravidian languages, indeed, are destitute of passive properly so called, and therefore, resist every effort to bring *paḍ-u* into general use. Such efforts are constantly being made by foreigners, who are accustomed to passives in their own tongues, and fancy that they cannot get on without them; but nothing sounds more barbarous to the Dravidian ear than the unnecessary use of *paṭu* as a passive auxiliary. It is only when combined with nouns that its use is thoroughly allowable."

- (i) by using the verb stem;
- (ii) by suffixing one of the verb stems, **uṇ** 'to experience, obtain, enjoy, eat, consume', **uru** 'to experience, suffer', or **paṭu** 'to experience, suffer, befall' to nominal stems. These verbs are used as second stems in compound verb stems. See "The Compound Verb Stem" for information on the first stem and the second stem;
- (iii) by periphrasis: **paṭu** or **peru** 'to experience, obtain' is added to an infinitive ending with **(kk)a**.

### EXAMPLES

#### Formation mechanism: using bare verb stem

nallār uṇṇupelām koṇṭu **iyarriyāl** (*kali.56:7-8*)  
 [**iyarriyāl** 'she, who was created' < **iyarru** 'to create']<sup>2</sup>  
 'she who was created with the limbs of all the lovely ones (women).'

**nin veyyōl** (*pura.222:2; 391:18*)  
 [**vey** 'to like, desire']<sup>3</sup>  
 'she, whom you like'

**nī veyyōloṭu ... nerunal āṭinai puṇalē** (*aka.6:7, 11*)  
 [**vey** 'to like, desire']  
 'You bathed in the river yesterday with her, whom you like.'

<sup>2</sup> In such participial nouns, the passive voice is expressed without being marked for passive. The context alone determines the actual meaning.

<sup>3</sup> Compare **en veyyōl** 'she, who likes me' (*pura.159:14*).

**añcuvatu añcā aṇṇi allā** (kali.42:26)

[añcuvatu ‘that which has to be feared’ < añcu ‘to fear’]

‘He is not a virtueless person who does not fear **what ought/has to be feared.**’

**āyiram vittiyatu viḷaiya** (matu:11)

[vittiyatu ‘what was sown’ < vittu ‘to sow’]

‘as **what was sown** grows in thousands’

**vaṛai kāl yāttatu vayiṇ toruṁ perukuvir** (peru:133)

[yāttatu ‘that which was bound/tied’ < yā ‘to bind’]

‘At every place you will get the fried meat (of the animal) **which was bound** to a post (when being raised).’

**ceypa ellām ceytaṇṇ** (pura.239:19)

[ceypa ‘those which are done’ < cey ‘to do’]

‘He did all **those which were to be done.**’

Formation mechanism— nominal stem + **uṇ/uru/paṭu**

### *Structure and Example*

**uṇ** ‘to experience, obtain, enjoy, eat’

(nominal stem + **uṇ**)

**pōr tōṛru k kaṭṭuṇṭār kai pōlva ... kāntaḷ** (pari.18:34-35)

[kaṭṭuṇṭār < kaṭṭu ‘binding’ + uṇṭār ‘those who experienced’]

**kaṭṭuṇ** < kaṭṭu (< kaṭṭu ‘to tie, bind’) + **uṇ**]

‘the kāntaḷ flowers which are like the **bound** hands of losers in the war’

**purivuṇṭa puṇarcci** (kali.142:1)  
 [purivuṇṭa < purivu 'intertwining' + uṇṭa 'that which experienced'  
 purivuṇ < purivu (puri 'to intertwine') + uṇ]  
 'union which has enjoyed the intertwining'

**uru** 'to experience, attain'

(nominal stem + **uru**)

**alavuṛru** k kuṭi kūva (kali.10:5)  
 [alavuṛru 'experiencing grief';  
 alavuṛu < \*alavu 'grief' (ala 'to grieve') + uru]  
 'as the subjects experienced grief and screamed'

ivaṭkē ceyvuṛu maṇṭilam mai yāppatu pōl mai il vāl mukam pacappu  
 ūrummē (kali.7:7-8)  
 [ceyvūṛu maṇṭilam 'maṇṭilam which experienced'  
 ceyvuṛu < \*ceyvu 'the making' (cey 'to do, make') + uru]  
 'Lovesick pallor spreads on her flawless bright face as if darkness  
 is blended with the moon which was (man)made.'

**paṭu** 'to experience, befall, suffer'

(nominal stem + **paṭu**)

karantatūum kaiyoṭu kōṭpaṭṭām kaṇṭāy (kali.115:3)  
 [kōṭpaṭu 'to be caught';  
 kōḷ 'holding, grabbing' (< koḷ 'to grab') + paṭu]  
 'We were caught with what we concealed, you see.'

kāay k koṇṭa num iyam toypaṭāmal ... viṭarakam pukumiṇ  
 (malai:365-366)

[toypaṭu 'to experience sagging';  
 toy 'sagging' (< toy 'to sag') + paṭu]



‘Enter the cliff (carefully so that) the musical instruments you are carrying by hanging do not **sag**.’

Formation mechanism: infinitive ending with (kk)a + paṭu/peru

### *Structure and Example*

**paṭu** ‘to experience’

(infinitive in (kk)a + **paṭu**)

pēey k koḷiyaḷ ivaḷ **enappaṭutal** (kuṛu.263:5)  
 [**enappaṭu** ‘to be said’; **ena** infinitive (< **en** ‘to say’) + **paṭu**]  
 ‘to be said that she is possessed by a demon’

karutiyatu muṭittalum **kāmurappaṭutalum** (ciṛu.213)  
 [**kāmurappaṭu** ‘to be desired’;  
**kāmuṛa** infinitive (< **kāmuṛu** ‘to desire’) + **paṭu**]<sup>4</sup>  
 ‘accomplishing what (you) intended and to be desired’

avar vati vayiṇ **nīnkappaṭiṇē** (kuṛu.395:8)  
 [**nīnkappaṭu** ‘to be left behind’;  
**nīnka** infinitive (< **nīnku** ‘to leave, depart’) + **paṭu**]  
 ‘if I am left behind as he leaves toward his place’

nī nayantu **uraiyappaṭṭōl** (aiṅk.370:3)  
 [**uraiyappaṭu** ‘to be stayed over (with)’;  
**uraiya** infinitive (< **urai** ‘to stay over’) + **paṭu**]  
 ‘she with whom you stayed’

<sup>4</sup> Note that **kāmuṛu** itself has two components: **kām** ‘desire, passion’ + **uṛu** ‘to feel, attain.’

(Note that **urai** ‘to stay over’ is not a verb that has a direct object. Yet, the passive form **uraiyappaṭu** is used. Perhaps it shows the influence of Sanskrit syntax?)

ivaḷ ... ēru koḷpavar allāl tiru mā mey tīṇṭalar eṇru ... collāl  
**tarappaṭṭavaḷ** (kali.102:9-10, 12)  
 [tarappaṭu ‘to be brought’; tara infinitive (< tar ‘to bring’) + paṭu]  
 ‘She is someone who **was brought** (over to this field) announcing that no one except those who would take hold of the bull (in the bull fight) could touch her lustrous dark body.’  
 (Note that the agent for the passive is in the instrumental: **collāl** ‘by words’)

nārai nalan **uṇappaṭṭa** nalkūr pētai (narr.178:2-3)  
 [uṇappaṭu ‘to be enjoyed’; uṇa infinitive (< uṇ ‘to enjoy’) + paṭu]  
 ‘the agonizing female whose loveliness **was enjoyed** by the male crane’

pacalaiyāl **uṇappaṭṭāl** (kali.48:16)  
 [uṇappaṭu ‘to be eaten’;  
 uṇa infinitive (< uṇ ‘to eat, consume’) + paṭu]  
 ‘she **who is eaten** by lovesick pallor’  
 (Note that the agent for the passive is in the instrumental: **pacalaiyāl** ‘by lovesick pallor’)

**kaippaṭukkappaṭṭāy nī** (kali.93:15)  
 [kaippaṭukka p paṭu ‘to be made to be caught’  
 < kaippaṭukka + paṭu;  
 kaippaṭukka infinitive < kaippaṭu ‘to befall inside one’s hands; be caught’; kaippaṭu < kai ‘hands’ + paṭu]  
 ‘You are caught!’

(Note the double use of **paṭu**. One can interpret it also as a complex sentence: ‘You are caught [**paṭṭāy nī**], as you were caused to be caught [**kaippaṭukka**].’)

**emmāl viyakkappaṭūmor** (*pura.197:9*)

[**viyakkappaṭu** ‘to be admired’;

**viyakka** infinitive (< **viya** ‘to admire’) + **paṭu**]

‘those who are admired by us’

(Note that the agent for the passive is in the instrumental: **emmāl** ‘by us’)

**peru** ‘to experience, obtain’

(infinitive in **a** + **peru**)

**muntu viṇai etir varapperutal kāṇiyar** (*pati.42:17*)

[**varapperu** ‘to experience the emerging’;

< **vara** infinitive (< **var** ‘to emerge, come, be within reach’) + **peru**]

‘in order to see that the forthcoming war experiences an emergence’

‘in order to see that a war is emerging’

**nī emmai vēṇṭuval eṇṇu vilakkiṇai niṇ pōlvār tīṇṭapperupavō**

(*kali.94:6-8*)

[**tīṇṭapperu** ‘to be touched’;

**tīṇṭa** infinitive (< **tīṇṭu** ‘to touch’) + **peru**]

‘You intercepted us saying that you desired us. Will people like you be (ever) touched (by us)?’

uppu ilāa avi p pulukkal ... ilipirappinōn īyapperru

(*pura.363:12, 14*)

[īyapperu 'to be given'; īya infinitive (< ī 'to give') + peru]

'given the saltless twice-boiled rice by the low-born'

## THE PAST STEM

**GENERAL:** The form that a verb stem assumes to indicate that the action or state indicated by the verb has a completive (or perfective aspect) is here called the “past stem.” The completive aspect does not denote temporality.<sup>1</sup> The past stem serves as a base for the adverbial participle suffix **u**, past adjectival participle suffix **a**, PNG suffixes, the comparative **anna** and **enna**, the quotative **ena** ‘that’, the conditional suffix **āl/ēl**, some nouns, certain particles, and the postposition **uli**.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Modern scholars, who have discussed the notion of time and tense in Tamil, have come increasingly to believe that Tamil, especially Early Old Tamil, reflects a verb system indicating “perhaps a primary aspectual (and not temporal) dichotomy” (Zvelebil, quoted in Sjöberg [1966:288]). See Ramasamy (1975) and Sjöberg (1968) for further discussions.

<sup>2</sup> In a very few contexts, the past stem appears to be the same as the non-past stem, and **n** intervenes between the suffix added to the stem: cf. **ānatu** ‘it became’ (*kali.147:3*). Some have concluded that the past tense suffix has a “zero allomorph” and the **n** is a hiatus-filler in such cases (cf. Zvelebil 1970:41). This study considers **ānatu** and the only other similar form in this period, **pōna** (*pari.22:11*), as contracted forms of **\*āyīnatu** and **\*pōyīna** respectively, and takes **y** as the past/completive marker and **n** as an inflectional increment. Cf. **āyīna** ‘they became’ (*pati.13:19*) and **poyīnar** ‘they went’ (*aink.320:4*). See also “A

Among them, the adverbial participle suffix, the comparative **anna** and **enna**, the quotative **ena**, some nouns, certain particles, and the postposition **uli** are added directly to the past stem. The conditional suffix **āl** is added directly to certain past stems while **in** intervenes between the past stem and the suffix **āl** in certain other situations. The conditional suffix **ēl** is added directly to the past stem. The adjectival participle suffix and PNG suffixes are added directly to the past stem, or **an/in** intervenes between the past stem and the PNG. In some cases, this **an/in** seems to denote a “present perfect” tense, but in most cases does not. Therefore, it could be construed, after the tradition, as a **cāriyai** “inflectional increment.” Examples of these occurrences are provided below.

See footnote 3 in “Adjectival Nouns or Appellative nouns” for an explanation of **an**. See “The Adverbial Participle,” “The Past Adjectival Participle,” “Past Personal Verbs,” “Past Participial Nouns,” and “The Conditional” for specific examples of how the past stem is used.

**FORMATION:** Certain markers known as the “past tense markers,” “past tense suffixes,” or simply the “past markers” are suffixed to a verb stem to make the latter a “past stem.” It is preferable to call these markers “completive aspectual markers” or simply, “completive markers.” The past/completive markers are **i**, **y**, **t**, **tt**, and **nt**. **t**, **tt**, and **nt** are contextual variants of what can be understood just as a consonantal marker which could be represented as **\*T**.

See “Stem Classification on a Phonological Basis” where classical Tamil stem-types are discussed. Among those, stems marked as Type (i) and Type (ii) take the past/completive marker **i** or **y**. Type (iii/c) takes the past/completive marker **i**. Stems which are marked as Type (a) take the

---

Note on the Verb **ān** for a discussion of the reduction **in** > **n**.

past/completive marker (t)t or nt. Stems marked as Type (b) take the past/completive marker tt or nt.

## EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: stem + past/completive marker

### *Past/Completive Marker*

### *Example*

i:

The stem ends with a consonant. The marker i may be lengthened when the stem contains a short vowel. When the marker i is not lengthened, the final consonant is doubled in the stem containing the short vowel. Otherwise, there is no change.

tiṇai uṇṇi ... kēḷal uṇṅum naṇ malai (aṅk.268:2, 3, 4)  
[uṇ 'to eat']

'the mountain where the pig sleeps **having eaten** the millet'

ciṇu puṇam putaiya vāri (aka.8:16)  
[vār 'to comb']

'**combing** (the hair) so that (your) small back is covered'

tūvaṇku etiriya mīṇ (aka.10:1-2)  
[etir 'to react, respond']

'fish which **reacted** to the sprinkle'

niṇṇai yāṇ collina (kali.116:13)  
[col 'to tell, reveal']

'what I **told** you'

pirinturai **valli** cenru viṇai eṇṇuti āyin (aka.191:11)

[**val** 'to be capable; skilled']

'If you are thinking about the task you would do by going away and **being capable** of living away (from her), ...'

veliṭṭōṇ ivan (pura.125:11)

[**vel** 'to conquer']

'He is the one who **won**.'

ce-v-viral **koḷḷiya** ceṇ kēḷ viḷakkattu (neṭu:144)

[**koḷ** 'to take hold, grasp']

'the red colored brightness which she **has put on** (her) red finger'

'the red colored bright ring **grasping** her red finger'

'the red colored bright ring on her red finger'

pōtoṭu **potuḷiya** vēlai veṇ pū (pura.215:2-3)

[**potuḷ** 'to crowd up']

'the white flowers of vēlai which was **crowded** with buds'

'the white vēlai flowers which were **surrounded** by buds'

cērpṇanai k kaṇṭāy pōla p putuvatu **kaviṇṇai** (kali.128:6-7)

[**kaviṇ** 'to adorn']

'You **acquired** fresh **attractiveness** as if you met with the man from the sea-shore.'

'You look attractive as if you just had a rendezvous with the man from the sea-shore.'

**i:**

The stem ends with a vowel. The disyllabic stem is open with short syllables. The stem-final vowel may be lengthened and/or a glide is inserted between the stem and the suffix **i**. The stem-final **a** is lengthened as **ai**, **i** is lengthened as **ī** or **ai**, while **u** is lengthened as **ai** very rarely. The marker **i** is added directly to the stem ending



with **ī** or **ai**. When the stem-final **u** does not become **ai**, it is deleted and subsequently, the past/completive marker **i** is lengthened.

paṇṭum inaiyaiyō eṇa **vinaviṇaḷ** yāyē (narr.55:6-7)  
 [**vinavi** < **viṇa** ‘to enquire’ + glide **v** + **i**]  
 ‘“Were you like this in the past too?” **enquired** my mother.’

mellitṇ **vinaii** ... emar kuṛai kūṛa (aka.300:15, 19)  
 [**viṇa** ‘to enquire’]  
 ‘as our kin **enquire** gently about yourself **and** make a request to you’  
 ‘as our kin greet you gently and make a request to you’

kaṇicci pōl kōṭu **cīi** ēru toḷūu p pukuttaṇar (kali.101:8-9)  
 [**cī** ‘to whittle, sharpen, gather as pile’]  
 ‘They **sharpened** the horns of the bulls (to look) like a trident and made them enter the stall.’

toṭalai **taii** p puṇakkilī kaṭiyum pūṇkaṇ pētai (kuru.142:1-2)  
 [**tai** ‘to decorate, wear, put on’]  
 ‘the innocent young woman who has **put on** a garland and chases away the parrots in the millet field’

iyavar araṇam kāṇātu mātiram **tuḷaiiya** naṇantalai p paiṇṇilam (pati.17:7-9)  
 [**tuḷa** ‘to stir up’]  
 ‘the vast green land where people with musical instruments, without refuge, **stirred up** (all) the directions’

māl anku uṭaiya ... akal arai k **kuvaii** (kuri:97, 98)  
 [**kuvi** ‘to pile up’]  
 ‘**piling up** the overwhelming (flowers) on the wide rock’

en ai vāliya palavē ... polantoti **ceṛīyōṇē** (narr.136:4, 9)  
[ceṛi 'to be tight']

'May he prosper, my man, who **made** my bangles become **tight**.'

puli cettu verīiya pukar muka vēlam (aka.12:11)  
[veru 'to shun']

'elephant with a speckled face which **shunned** (the vēṅkai tree) thinking it was a tiger'

tol nilai vaḷīiya niṅ toṭi (narr.332:3-4)  
[vaḷu 'to slip']

'Your bracelets **slipped** from their original place.'

vār mukil muḷakkiṅ maḷa kaḷiṟu mikīi (pati.84:11)  
[miku 'to be aroused, excited']

'young male elephants, **excited** like the roaring array of clouds'

vālai īmtaṭi vallitiṅ vakaii (narr.120:5)  
[vaku 'to split']

'**splitting** the juicy stalk of the plantain tree'

(Note that the stem-final **u** changed to **ai**.)

kāl iṟukiruka t tāḷ iṭīi (pari.10:11)  
[iṭu 'to put down, drop'; kāl 'lower part of the waist ornament']

'**putting** the locket so that the lower part is tightened'

tuyaram urīiyiṇaḷ emmē ... ivaḷ iṇṇa tāyē (narr.8:5, 10)  
[uru 'to experience']

'Her mother who gave birth to her **made** us **experience** grief.'

'Her mother who gave birth to her caused us grief.'

**i:**

The stem is non-monosyllabic and ends with a vowel. The disyllabic stem has a long vowel and/or a closed syllable. The stem-final vowel is deleted if it is **u**. There is no other change.

paṇṇirai ūrtiyotu **nalkiyōṇē** (pura.399:31-32)  
 [nalku 'to give away, provide']  
 'He gave away many cattle with a cart.'

atu kēṭṭu t talai **īraiñciṇalē** aṇṇai (narr.147:10-11)  
 [īraiñcu 'to stoop, bow']  
 'Our mother listened to it and bowed her head.'

eḷutiyaṇṇa koṭi (aka.297:13)  
 [eḷutu 'to write, paint']  
 'the vine that looked like it was painted'  
 (An instance of past/completive stem eḷuti + **anna**.)

nerunai em muṇ **tappiyōṇ** tampiyotu ... nālai c ceykuveṇ amar (pura.304:4-5, 6)  
 [tappu 'to wrong']  
 'I shall wage war with the younger brother of the man who wronged my older brother yesterday.'

kaviṇ **vāṭi** ... neytarpū c cāmpum pulattāṅkaṇ (paṭṭ:10-12)  
 [vāṭu 'to wither']  
 'in the region where the neytal flowers wilt losing their abundant/fascinating beauty'

putalvaṇ tāy avaṇ puṇam **kavaiiyiṇalē** (kuru.359:6)  
 [kavai 'to embrace']  
 'His son's mother embraced his back.'

**tt<sup>3</sup>:**

Certain monosyllabic stems and disyllabic stems ending with **ā, i, ī, u, ū, ai, o, ō, y, r, l, ḷ**, and **ḷ** take this marker. The past/completive marker **tt** and the stem-final consonant **ḷ** assimilate and result in **ṭṭ**. Similarly, stem-final **l** and the following past/completive marker **tt** assimilate and result in **ṛṛ**.<sup>4</sup>

pūttanṛu peruma nī kātta nāṭē (pati.13:28)  
[kā 'to shield, protect']  
'The country that you **protected** will (certainly) flourish.'

kaḷavum pulittana (aka.394:1)  
[puli 'to become tart, sour']  
'The kaḷavu fruits too have **become tart**.'

irumpu vaṭittanna karum-kai-k-kāṇavan (aka.172:6)  
[vaṭi 'to cast, mould']

<sup>3</sup> This marker **tt** does carry a causative/effective significance as opposed to the marker **nt**. One cannot always find a non-causative form in **nt** corresponding to every verb form that has **tt** as its past/completive marker. In such cases, the form with **tt** as its past/completive marker seems at least to have an object: e.g., **muḷ uṭutta** kāṭu 'the jungle which rises wrapping the thorns around' (peru:184). Or the verb form with **tt** as the past/completive marker seems to contain the stem which has resulted from mutation: e.g., **niruttu** 'making ... stand' (peru:344). Here, **niru** reflects stem mutation: **niru** 'to make stand, stay' < **nil** 'to stand.'

However, a case like **viyarttanen** 'I perspired' (kuru.84:1) is no doubt enigmatic, because it does not seem to have a causative/effective significance and yet contains the marker **tt**. Such verbs perhaps conveyed a different semantic significance in old Tamil than how they are understood in modern Tamil.

<sup>4</sup> Some might consider the past/completive marker to be **t** rather than **tt** in such cases: cf Hart and Hart (1979:119) and P.S. Subrahmanyam (1971:106-107).

‘the forest man who has strong/dark arms as if (they are) **cast** in iron’

ātal niṇ akattu aṭakki c cātal nīṅka emakku **īttanai** (*pura.91:10-11*)  
[ī to give’]

‘You concealed the (fact of) prosperity in you(r self) and **gave** (the fruit) to me so my weariness would leave.’

perum peyar maṇṇarkku oppa maṇai **vakuttu** (*neṭu:78*)  
[vaku ‘to define, specify’]

‘**specifying** the land appropriate for kings with great names’

cellā c celvam **mikuttanai** (*pura.160:27*)  
[miku ‘to abound, increase’]

‘You **increased** riches which do not vanish.’

muḷ **uṭuttu** eḷu kāṭu (*peru:184-185*)  
[uṭu ‘to wear, wrap around’]

‘the jungle which rises **surrounded** by thorns’

vaikāppu eḷunta mai paṭu parappiṇ **eṭuttēru** (*pati.41:22-23*)  
[eṭu ‘to arouse, lift’]

‘**arousing and tossing** (the enemies) in the dark surface (of the sea) where constant tumult was rising’

(An instance of past stem **eṭutt** + verbal noun **ēru** < **eṛi** ‘to toss.’)

ceṇṇōrai valī **taputtanai** (*pura.239:4*)  
[tapu ‘to destroy’]

‘**He destroyed** the descendants of his adversaries.’

**karuttōr** uṇu muraṇ (*pati.66:9-10*)  
[karu ‘to be angry’]

‘severe/intense hostility of those **who were angry**’

kuli **niruttu** ōmpiya kuṟuntāl ēṟṟai (peru:344)  
 [niru 'to make stay/stand']  
 'the short-legged male (animal) which was **made to stay** in a pit  
 and shielded'

pūli **pūtta** puḷal kālāmpi (ciru:134)  
 [pū 'to spread (like flowers)']  
 'hollow stemmed mushroom that **spread** on the dust'

evaṇ kol eṇṟu niṇaikkalum **niṇaittilai** (narr:297:5)  
 [niṇai 'to think, consider']  
 'You **did not** even **think** what the reason was.'

nallōrkku **ottanir** nīyir iṟtō celvaṟku **ottanam** yām (aka:26:19-20)  
 [o 'to be agreeable']  
 'You **are agreeable** to (other) lovely women. Here, we (hon.) are  
 agreeable to our darling son.'

celvar ... putalvar ciṟu tōḷ **kōtta** ... paṟai (narr:58:1-2)  
 [kō 'to hang with a string']  
 'drums which the male children of wealthy people **hung** on their  
 shoulders'

maṟavar pakaḷi **māyttēṇa** maruṅkul nuṇukiya pē mutir naṭukal  
 (aka:297:6-7)  
 [māy 'to lose luster, fade, mar, wear out']  
 'the frightening hero-stone whose sides are thinned, **worn out** by  
 the warriors' arrows'  
 (An instance of past stem **māytt** + **ēṇa** 'thus, so that.')

yāṇ **viyarttanēṇ** (kuru:84:1)  
 [viyar 'to perspire']  
 'I **perspired**.'

putalvaṇum poytal **karrāṇaṇ** (narr.166:7)  
 [kal 'to mature by experience, learn'; **karr** < kal + (t)t]  
 '(our) male child also has **learned** to play'

**corrātūum** parṛāl niṛam tirintāl (pari.12:52)  
 [col 'to reveal'; **corr** < col + (t)t]  
 'she did not hold on to what (he) **told** and became pale'

paḷam **ūl**ttu p payam pakarvu aṛiyā mayāṅku aril mutu pāl (pura.381:8-9)  
 [ūl 'to ripen']  
 'old desolate place with crowded vines where fruits **are mature** but  
 the informing/announcement of the yield is unknown'

nī kaṇṭaṇaiyō kaṇṭār k **kēṭṭaṇaiyō** (kuru.75:1)  
 [kēl 'to hear; be audible'; **kēṭṭ** < kēl + (t)t]  
 'Did you see or **did** you **hear** from those who saw?'

entaiyum koṭukka eṇa **vēṭṭēmē** (aink.6:6)  
 [vēl 'to wish for'; **vēṭṭ** < vēl + (t)t]  
 'We **wished** that our father also would give us away (in marriage).'

**t:**

Certain disyllabic stems ending with **u** preceded by **k**, **ṭ**, **r**, or **l**, all the stems ending with **ṇ**, certain monosyllabic stems ending with **y**, some monosyllabic and all the disyllabic stems ending with **l**, certain stems ending with **l**, and all the stems ending with **ṇ** take this marker.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Historically, it seems, when the consonantal type of past/completive marker (\*T) was innovated, roots which ended with **ṇ** but did not take the formative suffix **u** took the past/completive marker **t**. Stems with the formative suffix **u** retained the past/completive

When the consonant preceding the stem-final **u** is **k**, **ṭ**, or **r**, the stem-final is deleted. Then, the past-marker assimilates to the stem-final **k**, **ṭ**, and **r**: **k + t > kk**; **ṭ + t > ṭṭ**; **r + t > rr**.<sup>6</sup>

When the monosyllabic stem has a consonant other than **y** as its final, the final consonant and the past/completive marker are assimilated: **ṇ + t > ṇṭ**; **l + t > nr**; **ḷ + t > ṇṭ**; **n + t > nr**.

eṇ mukam nōkki **nakkāṇaṇ** (kuri:183)  
[**naku** ‘to smile, chuckle’; **naku + t > nakk**]  
‘He looked at my face and **smiled**.’

entaiyum nīl nīra p perum kaṭal **pukkāṇaṇ** (kuru.269:3-4)  
[**puku** ‘to enter, go into’; **puku + t > pukk**]  
‘My father also **went onto** the big blue-colored sea.’

pulavar nuṇṇitiṇ kayiru **iṭṭu** (neṭu:76)  
[**iṭu** ‘to put down, lay down’; **iṭu + t > iṭṭ**]  
‘The learned people **laid down** the rope carefully and ...’

---

marker **i**: e.g., **pēṇ(u)** ‘to cherish, nurture’ + **i > pēṇi** (ciṟu:244), whereas **māṇ** ‘to be glorious’ + **t > māṇṭ** (cf. **māṇṭaṇa pati**.19:27).

<sup>6</sup> This particular analysis follows Zvelebil (1970:40) who gives examples of some of these changes: **cuṭu > cuṭṭu**; **miku > mikku**; **peru > perṛa**. In fact, the same process can be understood as stem mutation. See “Morphophonemics” for stem mutation.

If stem mutation is taken as the process which produces **kk** from **k**, **ṭṭ** from **ṭ**, and **rr** from **r** in certain contexts, then it would be helpful to explain forms like **cettōr** ‘carcasses; those who are dead’ (*puṛa*.240.8) as derived from **cetu** ‘to rot; lose life’, instead of positing an irregular root \***cā** ‘to die.’ See 5.8 in “Morphophonemics” for more examples of this kind.



viruntin vāḷkkaiyoṭu peruntiru **arrena** (pati.71:19)

[**aru** ‘to sever’]

‘since great prosperity **severed** due to strange living’

(An instance of past stem **ar** + **ena** ‘thus, so.’)

cunai-p-pū k **kurru** (kuru.142:1)

[**ku** ‘to pick’; **ku** + **t** > **kurru**]

‘picking flowers from the pool’

māru **porutu** oṭṭiya pukalvin (kuri:135)

[**poru** ‘to match, fight’]

‘the pride of **having matched** and driven away the enemy’

tāl nilal maruṅkil aṇukupu kuṟuki t **tolutu** muṇ niṟkuvir āyin (poru:149-150)

[**to** ‘to worship, bow’]

‘if you would approach the shadow of his feet and stand in front of him **having done obeisance**’

nīyum **kaṇṭu** numaroṭum eṇṇi aṟivarintu aḷaval vēṇṭum (narr.32:5)

[**kāṇ** ‘to see’]

‘You must **see** it for yourself, think it over along with your kin, and discuss it knowing what needs to be known.’

perum pāṇ kāval **pūṇṭeṇa** (narr.40:3)

[**pūṇ** ‘to wear’]

‘as the big bard **took on** (the task of) guarding’

(An instance of past stem **pūṇṭ** + **ena** ‘thus.’)

nīḷal muṇṇil nila ural **peytu** (peru:96)

[**pey** ‘to pour’]

**‘pouring (the paddy) into the mortar made in the ground in the shady porch’**

eri **kānraṇṇa** pūñciṇai (malai:498)  
 [kāl ‘to spurt, emit’]  
**‘flowering branch which looks like it is emitting flame’**  
 (An instance of past stem **kānr** + comparative **aṇṇa**.)

vēṅkai koykuvam **cenruḷi** (aka.48:6)  
 [cel to go’]  
**‘when we went to pick vēṅkai flowers’**  
 (An instance of past stem **cenr** + postposition **uḷi**.)

koṇmū māka vicumpiṇ naṭuvu **ninrāṅku** (pura.35:17-18)  
 [nil ‘to stand’]  
**‘as if the rain cloud stayed in the center of the heavenly skies’**  
 (An instance of past stem **ninr** + particle **āṅku**.)

ceru p **pukanru** eṭutta ... neṭum koṭi (tiru:67)  
 [pukal ‘to announce, declare’]  
**‘tall flag which was raised announcing war’**

tuvarai **āṇṭu** (pura.201:10)  
 [ā ‘to rule over’]  
**‘ruling over (the city of) Tuvarai’**

vicumpu uṭaṇ **iruṇṭu** vemmai nīṅka (aka.283:11)  
 [iruḷ ‘to darken’]  
**‘as it darkened all over the sky and the heat was gone’**

āymakaḷ tayir **koṭu** vanta tacumpu (pura.33:2-3)  
 [koḷ ‘to take hold, receive’]  
 ‘the pot in which the shepherdess **held** the yogurt and brought’  
 ‘the pot in which the shepherdess brought the yogurt’

iḷantaḷir koytu **koṭu** (pura.159:10)  
 [koḷ ‘to take hold’]  
 ‘picking young fresh leaves and **holding** (on to)/**carrying** them’  
 ‘picking young fresh leaves and **hooking** on to them’

nīṭu vālka eṇru yāṇ neṭum kaṭai kuṟuki (pura.237:1)  
 [nīḷ ‘to extend’]  
 ‘I approached his tall front yard praising “May you live **long**” and ...’

cinṇāl āṇraṇai āku (aka.325:14)  
 [āṇ ‘to be content’]  
 ‘**Be contented** for a few days.’

iṇru nāl uḷanta mel naṭai maṭa p piṭi (aka.85:6)  
 [iṇ ‘to give birth’]  
 ‘gently walking naive female elephant which **has given birth** and is exhausted for the day’

kiḷai k **kavinru** eḷutarum kiḷ nīr c ce-v-arumpu (tiru:29)  
 [kaviṇ ‘to adorn, fascinate’]  
 ‘red buds which rise up in the low waters **adorning** the branches’

nt:

Certain monosyllabic stems and disyllabic stems ending with a, i, ī, u, e, ai, o, ō, y, r, and ḷ take this marker. In the case of the stems **var** ‘to come (about)’, **tar** ‘to bring (about)’, **\*allār** ‘to be filled

with distress' (al 'distress' + ār 'to be full'), \*mālār 'to be full of bewilderment or laziness' (māl 'bewilderment, laziness, stupor' + ār 'to be full'), the stem-final r is lost in the process.

nīr ara varanta nirampā nīl itai (aka.53:5)  
[vara 'to turn dry']  
'endlessly long path **which has grown dry** without water'

atu viyantaneṇ tōli ... vatuvai eṇru avar vanta nāṇrē (narr.386:8,10)  
[viya 'to admire, adore']  
'When he came to marry you, I **admired** it.'

maram talai karintu nilam payam vāṭa (aka.169:1)  
['kari 'to be scorched']  
'as the tree tops were **scorched** and the yield on the ground withered'

acai naṭai p pētai melintilaḷ (kuru.182:6-7)  
[meli 'to be weary, grow thin']  
'the poor young staggering woman **is not weary**'

vēntu ... vālcci vīntu uku pōrkkaḷattu āṭum kō (pati.56:7-8)  
[vī 'to perish']  
'the king who dances in the battlefield where (enemy) kings fall down, their prosperity **having perished**'

maral vakuntu toṭutta cem pūn kaṇṇi (pura.264:2)  
[vaku 'to split, divide']  
'the garland of red flowers strung by **split** maral fibre'

ventu āru poṇṇiṇ anti pūppa (aka.71:6)  
 [ve 'to steam up, be hot']  
 'as dusk spread like gold that **has been melted** and is cooling off'

cēnta ceyalai (malai:160)  
 [ce 'to become red']<sup>7</sup>  
 'the ceyalai leaves which **turned red**'

vār kuḷai kaḷaintēṇa (neṭu:139)  
 [kaḷai 'to remove']  
 'since (she) **removed** (her) long earrings'  
 (An instance of past stem kaḷaint + quotative infinitive eṇa 'that, thus.')

takai peṛa mukainta ... vaṇa mulai (aka.177:18)  
 [mukai 'to grow like buds']  
 'beautiful breasts **which have grown** properly (like buds)'

nontu nontu ... uṇkaṇ pāvai aḷitaru veḷḷam nīntum nālē (narr.177:8-10)  
 [no 'to suffer internally']  
 'the time when I **repeatedly suffer internally** and the apple of my attractive eye swims in destructive flood of tears'

puṛam pōntu (neṭu:172)  
 [pō 'to go']  
 'going outside'

---

<sup>7</sup> Some might consider cēnta as derived from civanta 'that which is red.'

valavaṇ valpu āyntu ūra (narr.11:8)  
 [āy 'to select']  
 'as the capable charioteer **selected** the reins and rode'

allāntān pōla p peyarntān (kali.111:21)  
 [allā(r) 'to be distressed/grieved']  
 < al 'distress, darkness' + ār 'to be full']<sup>8</sup>  
 'He moved away as if he **was distressed.**'

kōṭu vārntaṇṇa veṇ pū t tālai (narr.203:4)  
 [vār 'to split straight, comb, straighten']  
 'the screw pine with white flowers which appear as if (it was a)  
 white conch **split straight**'  
 (An instance of past/completive stem vārnt + **anna** 'like')

eri ciṇam tavaṇta irum kaṭarṇu aṭai mutal (aka.75:4)  
 [tavaṇ 'to spread, diffuse']  
 'at the root of the dense dark forest where scorching flames **spread out**'

piṭiyōṭu kaṭiru puṇarntēṇṇa kuṟu neṭum tūmpoṭum muḷavu p punarntu  
 icaippa (aka.301:16-17)  
 'the short pipes and the long pipes sounded together with the drums  
**as if** a bull elephant **joined** its female elephant'  
 (An instance of past/completive stem puṇarnt + **enna** 'like, as if')

y:

Here, the stem has open syllables and ends with a short vowel other than u or with a long vowel other than ī or ai. The stem-final

<sup>8</sup> See "The Compound Verb Stem" for a discussion of this type of stem.

short vowel **a** is lengthened. The stem-final long vowel may or may not be lengthened further.<sup>9</sup>

nī cērnta il **vināyinaṇ** tēroṭu tiritarum pākaṇ (kali.68:16-17)  
[**vinā** ‘to enquire’]  
‘the driver who wanders with his chariot **enquiring** about the house  
you have reached’

āru vaṇappu eyta alar **tāyina** (aink.483:1)  
[**tā** ‘to spread’]  
‘The flowers **spread** and (so) the path attained beauty.’

aviḷ pū **muṭiyinaḷ** (narr.42:11)  
[**muṭi** ‘to tie up’]  
‘she (who) **tied up** the slipping/loose flowers’

uruva p pal pū t **tūuy** (tiru.241)  
[**tū** ‘to scatter’]  
‘(they) **scattered** many colorful flowers, and ...’

avaṇai āku eṇa ēyaḷ maṇ **yāyum** (narr.134:5-6)  
[**ē** ‘to command, order’]  
‘Mother also **ordered** “Be there.” ’

---

<sup>9</sup> In these examples, what precedes the **y** is the stem. Here, the **y** is taken as the “past/completive marker” instead of as a glide or hiatus-filler. The reason is that the adverbial participles of these stems end with **i** or **y**. A good attested example is **ēey** < **ē** ‘to command, order’ (*pati.11:13*). See also note 3 in “Past Personal Verbs.”

Perhaps it is better to consider **y** as a variant of **i** in these contexts, because **i** and **y** have been found to be interchangeable in word-final position (cf. *Tolkāppiyam*, *eḷuttatikāram*, *ḷampūraṇam*, Rule 58). For an analysis of **y** as a hiatus-filler, see Zvelebil (1970:41).

pal viyar am tukil talaiyil **tuṭaiyinaḷ** (narr.120:7-8)

[**tuṭai** 'to wipe']

'She **wiped** her perspiration with the end of her fine clothing.'

ilampaṭu kālai āyiṇum pulampal **pōyiṇru** pūṭṭa eṇ kaṭumpu  
(pura.380:15-16)

[**pō** 'to go']

'Although it was a time of having nothing, loneliness **was gone** from my wide spread group (of kith and kin).'

**pōoya** vaṇṭiṇāl pul eṇṇa tuṟai (kali.134:7)

[**pō** 'to go']

'waterfront which was lifeless because of the honeybees **that left** (the flowers)'

'waterfront which was lifeless because the honeybees had left (the flowers)'



## THE NON-PAST STEM

**GENERAL:** See also "The Past Stem." The form that a stem assumes to indicate that the action or state referred to by the verb/noun underlying the stem has an incomplete (or imperfective) aspect is here called the "non-past stem." The action/state indicated by the verb/noun might be in progress or forthcoming. Certain markers which indicate this kind of incomplete aspect of the action are normally known as the "non-past tense markers," "non-past tense suffixes," or "present tense markers." These markers are here called the "non-past markers" or "non-completive markers."

Depending upon the non-past/non-completive marker it contains, the non-past stem serves as a base for non-past adjectival participle suffix, PNG suffixes, the comparative **anna**, the postpositions **alavai** and **uli**, infinitive suffix, the conditional suffix **in/il**, the comparative **anna**, certain nouns and particles, the marker **inum** that signifies the senses 'although' and 'even if', and all the negative forms.

See "The Non-Past Adjectival Participle," "Non-Past Personal Verbs," "Non-Past Participial Nouns," "The Infinitive," "The Conditional,"

“The Concessive of Fact,” “The Concessive of Supposition,” and the chapters on negative forms such as the negative personal verbs and negative participial nouns to find out how the non-past stem is used. Examples of nouns and postpositions added to the non-past stem are given below with others.

**Formation:** There are three ways to derive a non-past stem:

- (i) by using the bare verb stem;
- (ii) by suffixation: one of the non-past/non-completive markers (k)k, (t)t, ñ/n, (p)p, m, or v is added to the bare stem;
- (iii) by periphrasis:
  - a) adding (k)kil ‘to be able’ to the bare stem;
  - b) adding iru ‘to sit, remain’, nil ‘to stand, stay’, or (k)kiṭa ‘to lie still’ to a verbal participle (adverbial participle or infinitive) ending with ā;
  - c) adding nil to an infinitive ending with ū.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Traditional commentators identify iru, nil, and kiṭa as signifying a “present” time, but do not specify that they follow a verbal participle ending with ā or ū: cf. Tolkāppiyam, collatikāram, Cēṇāvaraiyam: 131-132, Rule 202.

What is really happening is that the ā or ū which ends the participle is, in fact, the suffix which marks the non-completive aspect of the action/state indicated by the verb root underlying the participle. But whenever the verb which immediately follows the participle happens to indicate a steady state like iru, nil, or kiṭa, referring to specific states of being such as sitting down (iru), standing up (nil), and lying still (kiṭa), the grammarians do not comment on the ū, but separate the suffix ā from the participle and group it together with the following verb (iru, nil, or kiṭa in their subsequently conjugated forms) and refer to the resulting combination (āyiru, ānil, or ākiṭa) as “the present tense marker”: cf. Naṇṇūl, Rule 143, which includes āniṇru in the list of present tense affixes like kinru and kiru. Noticing that not only nil but iru and kiṭa also participate in this process, the commentators add them to the list of items indicating the “present” time: cf. Tolkāppiyam, collatikāram,

See “The Infinitive” for the use of *ā* and *ūu* and “A Note on the Verb *ā*” for more information on *ā*.

## EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: Using bare verb stem.

With some exceptions, monosyllabic verb stems and disyllabic stems are used as their respective non-past/non-completive stems if the verb underlying the stem is non-causative/affective. That is, the action indicated by the verb has no object or it affects the subject.

Some of the obvious exceptions are *pū* ‘to spread (like red blossoms)’, *kal* ‘to mature’, *nil* ‘to stand’, *koḷ* ‘to spin’, *naṭa* ‘to walk’, *para* ‘to fly’,

---

Cēṇāvaraiyam:131-132, Rule 202.

Things would be much simpler if one would take the verbal participle suffixes *ā* and *ūu* as the actual markers of the incomplete aspect and consider the verbs (*iru*, *nil*, and *kiṭa*) which follow such participles to be separate.

Now, *āyirunt* < *ā* + *y* + *iru* + *nt*; *āninr* < *ā* + *nil* + *t*; *ūuninr* < *ūu* + *nil* + *t*; *ākkiṭant* < *ā* + *k* + *kiṭa* + *nt*; *kinr* < *kil* + *t*; *kirp* < *kil* + *p*. This analysis would tell us that the *t* or *nt* which follows *iru*, *nil*, *kiṭa*, or *kil* signifies an incomplete aspect of the action/state, while the *p(p)* in the same place indicates a forthcoming aspect of the action/state underlying the verb roots preceding *ā*, *ūu* as well as *iru*, *nil*, *kiṭa*, and *kil*.

As a literary reference to get the semantics of *iru* and *kiṭa*, consider *куру.370:2-5*. This poem describes how the lovers exist as two bodies appearing to have two sides if they sit together (*iruppin*) and how they appear to have only one side when they are lying still (*kiṭappin*): *ūraṇḍṭu iruppin iru maruṅkiṇamē* ‘We have two sides if I sit up with the *Ūraṇ*’; *kiṭappin villaka viralil porunti avaṇ nallakam cēriṇ oru maruṅkiṇamē* ‘If I am lying still with him, we join like the ring on a finger; and we have only one side if I join his lovely chest/if he joins my lovely chest.’

Commentators give a different interpretation for *nallakam* in *куру.370:5* to mean ‘good home’ which differs from my interpretation ‘good chest.’ Nevertheless, the point is to understand that *iru* and *kiṭa* in classical Tamil refer to two specific steady states.

and **iru** 'to remain, sit' which take the suffix **(k)k** or **(p)p**. And the verb **ninai** 'to think' is used with or without the suffix **kk**.

*Marker**Example*

Nothing: PNG or other suffixes are added directly to the verb stem, with a glide intervening occasionally

pari y uṭai vayanku tāḷ pantin tāva (narr.249:7)  
[tā 'to leap']  
'as the pacing brisk feet of the horse **leap** like a ball'

maññai ... naṇantalai pulampa k kūum (kuru.391:7, 8-9)  
[kū 'to screech']  
'The peacocks **are screeching** as the vast region resounds.'

vēlam ... tam kuḷuvoṭu puṇamtu pōm kuṇru (kali.25:9, 10-11)  
[pō 'to go, proceed']  
'hill through which the elephants **proceed** with their group'

tōḷitai muyakkam nīyum veyyai (aka.112:10)  
[vey 'to like, desire']  
'You also **desire** the embracing between (your and your lover's) shoulders.'

innum ... uḷḷēn (pura.365:7, 9)  
[uḷ 'to exist']  
'I still **exist**.'

ūraṇ koṭumai nāṇi nallaṇ enrum yāmē allāṇ ennum eṇ taṭa men tōlē (aink.11:2-4)  
[eṇ 'to say, utter']

‘Ashamed of the Ūraṇ’s cruelty, I say “He is a good person”; My soft curvaceous shoulders **say** “He is not.” ’

viḷuppuṇ **taṇimār** kāppu eṇa ... koṭicciyar pāṭal (*malai:303, 304*)  
[**taṇi** ‘to heal’]

‘hill-women’s singing as protection **to heal** the wounds of war heroes’

**niṇaiy**um kālai nīyum ... avarkku aṇaiyai allai (*puṛa.213:7-8*)  
[**niṇai** ‘to think’]

‘Come **to think** of it, you too are not like that for him.’

kīḷ nīrāṇ mīṇ **vaḷaṅkuntu** (*puṛa.396:1*)  
[**vaḷaṅku** ‘to move around’]

‘The fish **move around** in the low waters.’

āṇā c ciṛumaiyaḷ ivaḷum **tēmpum** (*kuri:26*)  
[**tēmpu** ‘to sob’]

‘She too **is sobbing**, feeling down endlessly.’

#### Formation mechanism: suffixation

stem + non-past/non-completive marker (k)k/ñ/(t)t/n/(p)p/m/v

Monosyllabic stems and disyllabic stems take the non-past/non-completive marker **kk**, **tt**, or **pp** when the action underlying the verb is transitive/effective. That is, the action indicated by the verb has an object or it affects someone/something other than the subject. Although they are not intrinsically transitive/effective, some exceptional stems like **pū** ‘to spread (like red blossoms)’, **naṭa** ‘to walk’,

**para** 'to fly', **oli** 'to sound', and **iru** 'to sit, remain' take the non-past/non-completive marker **kk**, **tt**, or **pp** instead of **k**, **t**, **p**, or **v**.<sup>2</sup>

Monosyllabic stems and disyllabic stems take the marker **k**, **t**, **p**, or **v** when the action underlying the verb is non-causative/affective.<sup>3</sup> That is, the action indicated by the verb has no object or it affects the subject. Although they are transitive/effective, stems like **nukar** 'to enjoy' take the marker **k**, **t**, **p**, or **v** instead of **kk**, **tt**, or **pp**.

The non-past/non-completive marker (t)t is restricted to preceding the first person plural suffix **um** and the second person singular and plural suffixes. There is only one exception, **pukutum** (third person neuter singular), which is treated below. The non-past/non-completive markers **ñ**, **n**, and **m** are restricted to adjectival and participial nouns.

An enunciative **u**, which might be considered as a formative suffix, is added to some consonant-final stems before adding the non-past/non-completive marker. When (k)k is the non-past/non-completive marker, the **u** follows it. Also the glide **v** intervenes between that marker with **u** and the PNG suffix that does not begin with **u**.

---

<sup>2</sup> **kk** varies with **pp**:

**irukkuvēn** (*kali.142:32*) *vs.* **iruppēn** (*kali.75:23*)

<sup>3</sup> **k** varies with **v** and nothing:

**celkuvai** (*puṛa.160:14*) *vs.* **celvai** (*puṛa.103:5*)

**pōkum** (*kali.22:20*) *vs.* **pōm** < **pō** + **um** (*kali.25:11*)

*Marker**Structure and Example***(k)k:**

vaḷu inṛu paḷakiya kiḷamaiyar ākiṇum (pura.216:3)

[ā 'to be']<sup>4</sup>

'although they **have** the claim to have been flawlessly acquainted with'

pirivu nāḷum pala ākuva

(kuru.104:5)

[ā 'to be']

'The days of separation are **becoming** many.'

kaṭi naṛai pukaii k **kā**kkam vammō kātal am tōḷi (pura.281:6-7)

[kā 'to protect']

'My loving friend, come, let **us** burn protective fragrant things and **protect** (the warrior's wounds from the animals).'

kal atar k kavalai **pō**kin ... arum tuyar tarum ivaḷ paṇi vār kaṇṇē

(aka.77:12, 19)

[pō 'to go']

'If you **go** through the intersection / forked way which is full of stony paths, her tearful eyes will give intense grief.'

cuṭar kāy curam **pō**kum nummai

(kali.22:20)

[pō 'to go']

'you who **are going** to (go through) the forest where the sun is burning hot'

---

<sup>4</sup> Some might take the stem to be āku 'to become.'

muṛuval iṇ nakai kāṇkam (narr.81:9)

[kāṇ 'to see']

'Let us see (her) sweet bright smile.'

'We shall see (her) sweet bright smile.'

ceru p pala ceykuvai (pati.36:14)

[cey 'to do, make']

'You make many wars.'

kaṭuñ cūḷ tarukuval niṇakkē (aka.110:5)

[tar 'to provide, give']

'I shall give you a serious promise.'

(Notice the enunciative u.)

iṇṇē varukuvaṇ oḷikka avarḷku iṭamē (pura.216:12)

[var 'to come']

'He will come now. Leave a place for him.'

(Notice the enunciative u.)

celkuvai āyiṇ nalkuvaṇ peritu (pura.160:14)

[cel 'to go, leave for a destination']

'If you will go he will give you a great deal (of gifts).'

irantu cel māḷkaṭku iṇi iṭaṇ iṇri p parantu icai niṛka p pāṭiṇaṇ (pura.126:12-13)

[niḷ 'to stay, continue to exist']

'Without leaving an opportunity for the suppliants (to beg elsewhere), he sang (of you) so that your fame spreads and stays (for ever).'

kuḷaviyoṭu pacu maral kaṭkum kāntaḷ vēli c ciṛukuṭi (kuru.100:2-3)

[kaḷ 'to weed, pick']

'(people of the) small residences with kāntaḷ fences where (they) weed out wild jasmines and fresh green maral bushes'



niṇ maṇaiyōḷ **kēṭkin** varuntuvaḷ peritē (aīnk.81:4, 5)  
 [kēḷ ‘to hear’]

‘If your wife **hears** (of it) she will grieve very much.’

ūṇoli aravam tāṇum **kēṭkum** (pura.173:4)  
 [kēḷ ‘to be audible’]

‘The noise of (people getting) food is **audible**.’

ivar yār **en**kuvaḷ allal (narr.6:6)  
 [en ‘to say’]

‘She will not **ask** “Who are these people?”’

niṇṇai vaḷipattu **irakkuvēṇ** vantaṇen (kali.143:23-24)  
 [ira ‘to beg, request’]

‘I came to worship and **beg** of you.’

taṇ ūr k karuṅkai k kollaṇai **irakkum** tiruntilai neṭuvēḷ vaṭitticin  
 eṇavē (pura.180:11-13)

[ira ‘to beg, request’]

‘He **would beg** his town’s adept smith to make a long spear with a perfect leaf-like tip.’

puṇaviṇ cēval ... vēṅkai ... putu p pū p parantaṇa **naṭakka** yām  
 kaṇṭaṇam (narr.384:1, 7-8)

[naṭa ‘to walk’]

‘We (hon.) saw the male pigeon **walking** on the scattered fresh vēṅkai flowers.’

paruntu **para**kkallā p pārval **pācaṇai** (matu.231)  
 [para ‘to fly’]

‘**war camp** with an excellent view **where** vultures **cannot fly**’

(Note that the word **pārval** in the example is taken as **pār** ‘seeing’ + **val** ‘capable’.)

**maṛakka** viṭumō niṇ māmai k kaviṇē (aīnk.470:5)

[maṛa 'to forget']

'Will your attractive dark complexion **let/allow** (him to) **forget** (you)?'

**kaliyē** ciṛu veḷ uppiṇ koḷḷai cārri p perum kal naṇṇāṭṭu umaṇ **olikkuntu** (pura.386:16-17)

[oli 'to sound']

'The backwater announces the abundance of small white rock salt, whereas the salt merchants **make a noise** (about it) in the big mountain country.'

iṇitu uṭaṇ **kaḷikkil** iḷamai iṇitāl amma (aīnk.415:3-4)

[kaḷi 'to pass']

'Youth is sweet, indeed, if (one) **spends** it pleasantly with (one's companion).'

tītiṇmai teyvattāl kaṇṭi **teḷikku** (kali.91:7-8)

[teḷi 'to clarify, verify, reassure']

'Witness the harmlessness, by god, I **reassure** you.'

**ninaikkum** kālai maruṭkai uṭaitṭē (pura.217:1)

[niṇai 'to ponder, think']<sup>5</sup>

'Come to **think** of it, it is amazing!'

añcal ōmpu niṇ aṇi nalam **nukarku** (kuri:181)

[nukar 'to enjoy']

<sup>5</sup> Cf. **ninaiyum** (pura.213:7).

‘Prevent fearing. **Let me enjoy** your beautiful loveliness.’

‘Stay away from fearing. Let me enjoy your beautiful loveliness.’

maṇaikkōḷi p paim payir iṇaṇē ... nīrkkōḷi k kūy p **peyarkkuntu**  
(*pura.395:9, 11*)

[**peyar** ‘to move’]

‘The group of crying domestic fowls inviting their mates call out to the water fowls and **arouse** them.’

ñ:

ār aṇar uṇunar aru niṇam cuṭṭi k kūr eḷku **eṇiṇar** (*aka.71:11-12*)

[**eṇi** ‘to toss, throw’]

‘those who **throw** sharp spears pointing the dear chest of those who are in deep pain’

(t)t:

cāṭṭaṇ māynta piṇṇai mullaiyum **pūṭṭiyō** ollaiyūr nāṭṭē (*pura.242:5-6*)

[**pū** ‘to blossom’]

‘O jasmine, dare **you** to **bloom** in his Ollaiyūr country after Cāṭṭaṇ has died?’

O jasmine, have you dared to bloom in his Ollaiyūr country after Cāṭṭaṇ has died?’

cōṟuṭai k kaiyar vīṟu vīṟu iyaṅkum iruṅkiḷai c ciṟāar k **kāṇṭum**  
(*pura.173:8-9*)

[**kāṇ** ‘to notice, look at’]

‘We **are looking** at the large group of young children who walk briskly with rice in their hands.’

kāṇam iṟappa **eṇṇutir** āyin (*aka.5:15-16*)

[**eṇṇu** < **eṇ** ‘to think, intend’]

‘if you **intend** to cross the forest’

[Notice the enunciative **u.**]

yām avaṇiṇṇum varutum (cīru:143)  
 [var ‘to come’]  
 ‘We are coming from there.’  
 [Notice the enunciative u.]

ivaḷ aṇaṅku uṇṇai pōri (aiṅk.58:3)  
 [pōl ‘to resemble, be like’]  
 ‘You look as if you are experiencing her affliction.’

kēṭṭutum pāṇi ... murukaṇ ... paraṅkuṇṇu (pari.8:81-82)  
 [kēṭṭ causative of kē] ‘to hear, be audible’<sup>6</sup>  
 ‘We make rhythmic beats audible on Murukaṇ’s Paraṅkuṇṇu.’  
 [Notice the enunciative u.]

ūraṇ koṭumai nāṇi nallaṇ enṇum yāmē allāṇ enṇum eṇ taṭa meṇ tōḷē (aiṅk.11:2-4)  
 [eṇ ‘to say, utter’]  
 ‘Ashamed of the Ūraṇ’s cruelty, I say, “He is a good person.” My soft curvaceous shoulders say “He is not.” ’

pulattiyāl emmē (aka.39:25)  
 [pula ‘to sulk’]  
 ‘You are sulking with me.’

pulavuti mātō nīyē palarāl attai niṇ kuṇi iruntōrē (pura.219:3-4)  
 [pula(vu) ‘to sulk, be frustrated’]  
 ‘You are frustrated. There are many people who are with you (in this).’

---

<sup>6</sup> The form kēṭṭutum is one of its kind. Parimēlaḷakar, the earliest commentator on this text, translates kēṭṭutum as ‘Let us create.’ I have taken kēṭṭ\_ to be the archaic causative form of kē] ‘to hear; be audible.’ See “The Causative Stem” for information on deriving causative stems by stem mutation.

nām ilam ākuta**l** a**ṛi**tum ... cērp<sub>pa</sub>ṇoṭu nākāa ūnkē (*narr.299:6, 9*)  
[a**ṛi** ‘to know’]

‘We **know** that we become nothing when we do not rejoice with the man from the seashore.’

avaṇ tāṇaiyiṇ ... pōṇa nilam ellām pōr ār vaya**l** p**u**kuta  
(*pari.22:9, 10-11*)

[p**u**ku ‘to enter’]

‘like his army, as and wherever it went, the flood **entered** the fields filled with haystacks’

yāṇai ... kuḷavi ... ūr āṇ kaṇṇoṭu p**u**kutum nāṭaṇ (*narr.171:1, 3, 5*)  
[p**u**ku ‘to enter’]

‘The man from the country where elephant calves **enter** the village along with the calves of the cows.’

(Note that the non-past/non-completive marker **t** precedes the third person PNG **um**.)

aīnkūntal nal akam porunti oḷiyiṇ vaṇumai a**ñ**cuti (*aka.123:6-7*)  
[a**ñ**cu ‘to fear’]

‘You **are afraid** of (the possible) poverty if you stayed (home without seeking wealth) leaning on the lovely chest of (your) woman with five-fold tresses.’

nallaṇivu uṭaiyōr nalkuravu u**ḷḷ**utum peruma yām (*puṛa.197:17-18*)  
[u**ḷḷ**u ‘to remember’]

‘We **remember** the poverty of those who are wise.’

akaṇirō em āyam viṭṭu (*poru:123*)

[aka**l** ‘to depart, go away’]

‘Do you dare to **go away** leaving our group?’

n<sup>7</sup>:

ceṇmō peruma em viḷavu uṭai nāṭṭu eṇa yām taṇ ariyunam āka  
(*pura.381:5-6*)

[ari ‘to know’]

‘As we **informed** him “We shall now go to our festive country”, ...’  
As we said to him “We shall now go to our festive country” and  
waited **to know** of his response, ...’

kāṇunar vayāam kaṭku iṇ cēyārriṇ (*malai:476*)

[kāṇ ‘to look at, view’]

‘long river, pleasing to the eye, and which is sought by those who  
**look at** it ...’

[Notice the enunciative u.]

ariyal ārkai vaṇ kai viṇainar (*pati.62:16*)

[viṇai ‘work, task’]

‘**work men**, with strong hands, who drink toddy’

toṟutta vayal āral piṛaṇavum ēṟu poruta ceṟu ulātu vittunavum  
(*pati.13:1-2*)

[piṛaḷ ‘to wallow’; vittu ‘to sow’]

‘manured fields in which the āral fish **wallow**; and muddy lands  
where bulls fought and seeds **are sown** without ploughing’

---

<sup>7</sup> Some might consider this n to be a “hiatus-filler” (cf. Zvelebil 1967:31). It occurs in the slot (following the stem and preceding the PNG) where a past/completive marker would occur. Therefore, I am reluctant to treat it as a hiatus-filler in verb forms. Also see P.S. Subrahmanyam (1971:248-249) who considers this n as one of the “present-future suffixes” occurring in participial nouns.

(p)p:

**uṇpatu nāli uṭuppavai iraṇṭē** (pura.189:5)

[uṇ ‘to eat, consume’; nāli a measure]

‘(The amount of) what one **eats** is (equal to) a nāli; (The number of) what one wears is (equal to) only two (pieces of clothing).’

**pal yānai kāṇpal**

(pati.77:11-12)

[kāṇ ‘to see’]

‘I **see** many elephants.’

**niṇṇu kāṇpaṇṇa nī malai**

(pura.211:3)

[kāṇ ‘to see, look at’]

‘tall mountain which stands **as if** it is **looking** at (the world)’

(An instance of non-past/non-completive stem **kāṇp** + **anna**.)

**yāṇ ākiyar niṇ neṇcu nērpavaḷē**

(kuru.49:5)

[nēr ‘to be fit for’]

‘May I be the one who will **be fit** for your heart.’

**neṭuntēr pāni nīrpa**

(aka.50:4)

[nīl ‘to stay, wait’]

‘**as** the tall chariot **waits** around’

**kuṇṇu nekiḷppaṇṇa kuḷir koḷ vātai**

(aka.163:9)

[nekiḷ ‘to loosen’]

‘cold (wind) which blows **as if** it is **loosening** the hill’

(An instance of non-past/non-completive stem **nekiḷpp** + **anna**.)

**nāṭaṇ kēṭṭin**

(aka.98:29)

[kēḷ ‘to hear’]

‘**if** the Nāṭaṇ **hears** about it ...’

em kēḷvar k kāṇīrō **en**pavaḷ (kali.145:61)

[**en** 'to say']

'she who asks "Have you seen my companion?"'

kāmaṇ kaṇai **irappēṇ** (kali.147:59-60)

[**ira** 'to beg/request']

'I would **beg** for Kāmaṇ's arrows.'

piṛaṇ kaṭai **marappa** nalkuvaṇ celiṇē (pura.68:19)

[**maṛa** 'to forget']

'If you go, he will give **so that you will forget** about (going to) the doors of others.'

ulaiyiṇ pōkātu **aḷippinūm** ... kāmam kol ivaḷ kaṇ pacantatu (narr.35:9, 13)

[**aḷi** 'to be compassionate']

'Is it (due to) passion that her eyes turned pale, **although I was compassionate** without going away from her side?'

val viṇai vayakkutal valittimaṇ **valippaḷavai** (kali.17:6)

[**vali** 'to dare']

'You dare to brighten up (the conquered places) by hard work;  
**While you dare ...**'

(An instance of non-past stem **valipp** + postposition **aḷavai**.)

ūraṇoṭu **iruppiṇ** iru maruṇkiṇamē (kuru.370:2-3)

[**iru** 'to sit, remain']

'If I am **sitting** with the Ūraṇ, we are two bodies.'

pakal āṇṭu alkiṇai paratta eṇṇu yāṇ ikali **iruppēṇ** āyiṇ (kali.75:22-23)

[**iru** 'to remain in a certain state, continue']

'If I **continue** to be hostile saying "O you who go after other women, you stayed over there during midday", ... '



paṇi uraikkum kaṇṇoṭu **inaipāṅku** innātu uraivi (aka.164:9)

[**inai** 'to grieve over a thought']

'she who is **thinking** (about several things) and stays miserably with tearful eyes'

(An instance of non-past/non-completive stem **inaip** + particle **āṅku**.)

eyyāy āyiṇum **uraippal** tōḷi (aka.28:2)

[**urai** 'to tell']

'Although you will not understand, I shall **tell** you, my friend.'

puraivatu **ninaippiṇ** puraivatō inrē (pati.17:1)

[**ninai** 'to think']

'If one **would think** of what measures up to you, there is nothing that measures up to you.'

(u)m:

yāṇē aṇṇiyum uḷar kol ... nōkku arum ciṇu neṇi **ninaiyumōrē**

(narr.104:8, 12)

[**ninai** 'to think']

'Are there any besides me, **who would think** of the small path (through which my lover will come) that is difficult to be seen?'

vil uḷutu **uṇmār** nāppaṇ

(pura.170:4)

[**uṇ** 'to eat, consume']

'in the midst of those who **eat** / **make a living** by their bows'

**uṇmarum** **tinmarum**

(pati.24:18)

[**uṇ** 'to drink, eat'; **tin** 'to eat, munch']

'those who **drink** and those who **eat**'

kālai āvatu aṇṇiyār mālai **eṇmanār** mayāṅkiyōrē

(kali.119:15-16)

[**eṇ** 'to say']

**‘Those who say that it is evening, not knowing that it is morning, are confused.’**

**‘Those who are confused say that it is evening, not knowing that it is morning.’**

**V:**

ciru puṇ mālai uṇmai aṛivēṇ tōli avar k kāṇā ūṇkē (*kuṛu.352:5-6*)  
[aṛi ‘to know’]

**‘When I do not see him, I realize the existence of the mean little evening.’**

poṛuḷē ... ōṭu mīṇ vaḷiyiṇ keṭuva (*naṛṛ.16:3, 6*)  
[keṭu ‘to perish’]

**‘Wealth disappears like the path (in water created by) the moving fish.’**

iṇpuṛa viṭuti āyiṇ ciṛitu kuṇriyum koḷval ... ataṛpaṭa aṛuḷaḷ vēṇṭuvaḷ (*puṛa.159:24-26*)

[‘vēṇṭu ‘to wish for’]

**‘If you would let me go, I would accept even a small quantity of black-eyed red beans. I wish for such kindness.’**

vaṇnamum vaṇappam variyum vāṭa vaṛuntuvaḷ ivaḷ (*aka.119:2-3*)  
[vaṛuntu ‘to grieve’]

**‘She is grieving as her complexion, beauty, and shape are withering.’**

koṇ oṇru kūṛuvaṇ (*naṛṛ.233:5-6*)  
[kūṛu ‘to state’]

**‘I shall state something for no real reason.’**

nīḷiṭai maṭattakai meliya c cāy naṭakkum koḷ eṇa nōval yāṇē (*aka.219:16-18*)

[nō < no ‘to suffer internally’]

‘I **suffer** thinking whether (my girl) will (be able to) walk in the long path, being weary and her innocent nature losing (its) strength.’

poyyā elili **peyviṭam** nōkki (*puṛa.173:5*)  
[**pey** ‘to pour’]

‘looking for a place where the non-failing cloud **would pour** down’  
(An instance of non-past/non-completive stem **peyv** + noun **iṭam** ‘place/time’)

**varuvaṇ** eṇṛa kōṇatu perumai (*puṛa.217:7*)  
[**var** ‘to come’]

‘the greatness of the king who said, “He (the friend) **will come**” ’  
[Notice the enunciative **u.**]

kaṭiyuṭai viyaḷ nakar **celvuḷi** c **celvuḷi** (*aka.49:14-15*)  
[**cel** ‘to go’]

‘as she **goes** and **goes** around (her father’s) vast protected house’  
(An instance of non-past/non-completive stem **celv** + postposition **uḷi.**)

**celvai** āyiṇ cēṇōṇ allāṇ (*puṛa.103:5*)  
[**cel** to go’]

‘If you **would go**, he would not be distant.’

pakaiyaṛu paya viṇai muyaṛi maṇ **muyalvalavai** (*kali.17:14*)  
[**muyal** ‘to undertake’]

‘You are undertaking a fruitful action that knows no enmity; while you **undertake** it ...’

(An instance of non-past/non-completive stem **muyalv** + postposition **aḷavai.**)

yāṅku aṛintaṇar ... tōḷi ... pirintu cēṇ uṛaital valluvōrē  
(*kurū.154:1, 8*)

[**val** 'to be capable']

'How did he know/learn to be **someone capable** of living far away, being separated from me?'

iṇṇum vāḷval eṇ itaṇ paṇṇē  
(*puṛa.245:7*)

[**vāḷ** 'to live']

'I still live. What is its nature?'

#### Formation mechanism: periphrasis

bare stem + (k)kil

verbal participle in ā + **iru/kiṭa/nil**

infinitive in ūu + **nil**

#### *Structure and Example*

(bare stem + (k)kil)

paḷaṇ kēṇmai kaṇṭariyātēṇ pōḷ **karakkirpeṇ** maṇ kolō (*kali.39:39-40*)

[**kara** 'to hide, conceal']

'Would I **be able to conceal** (the truth) as if I did not know of your old/past friendship?'

varuvīr ākutaḷ uraimiṇ ... kāṇam cenrōrmaṇ eṇa **irukkirpōrkkē**  
(*aka.387:3, 19-20*)

[**iru** 'to remain, stay']

'O tell that you will return to them who **could remain** thinking, "Alas! He has left for the forest." '

tīramum vaiyaiyum cērkiṇṇa kaṇ kavin  
(*pari.22:35*)

[**cēr** 'to join']

‘the fascinating beauty (that emerges **where/when**) the bank and  
(the river) Vaiyai **join**’

putu nār̥ram **ceykinrē** cem pūm puṇal (pari.7:21-22)  
[cey ‘to do, make’]

‘The red water filled with flowers is **creating** new fragrance.’

vatuvaīyul paṇṭu ariyātīr pōl **paṭarkirpīr** maṇ kolō (kali.39.37:38)  
[paṭar ‘to move about, behave’]

‘Will you **go around / conduct yourselves** at the wedding as if you  
did not know each other before?’

(adverbial participle in ā + iru)

pirintu uṛal **ariyā iruntu** kavavi (aiṅk.419:2)  
[ari ‘to know’]

‘hugging **without knowing** separation’

(infinitive in ā + kkiṭa)

māl yāl **kēlā k kiṭantān** pōl perum kaṭal tuyil koḷḷum ... kāṇal<sup>8</sup>  
(kali.123:4-5)

‘sea-shore where the big ocean sleeps like Tirumāl (Vishnu) who is  
**lying still** (in slumber) **while listening** to the music of the harp’

(infinitive in ā + nil)

cura naṇi **vārā ninraṇal** (aiṅk.397:3)  
[vār < var ‘to come’]

---

<sup>8</sup> Compare kuruku irai tēra k **kiṭakkum** ... iṇ iḷa vēṇil ... vaiyai ‘(The river) Vaiyai lies  
still in the spring while the herons look for their prey (in the water)’ (pari.6:76-77).

'She is **staying** in the forest **while coming**'

'She is **coming** through the forest.'<sup>9</sup>

(infinitive in *ūu* + *nil*)

paṇi aṭūu ninra pāṇāl kaṅkul

(aka.125:11)

[aṭu 'to kill, conquer']

'middle of the night when the cold is **killing**'

---

<sup>9</sup> This is the traditional interpretation. But compare vāy vālā ninrāl tikaittu (*pari.20:46*) which means 'stunned, she **stood without being able** to speak', which describes a motionless state and so gives a negative meaning. See "A Note on the Verb ā" for a discussion of ā.



## SECTION 4





## PAST PERSONAL VERBS

**GENERAL:** Finite verbs tell us: (a) what action was or will be done, (b) who did or will do the action, and/or (c) the state of the action, completive or non-completive. These verb forms are here called “personal verbs” because they contain information, in the form of a PNG suffix, about the doer of the action.<sup>1</sup> The past personal verbs tell us that the action or state indicated by the verb has a completive aspect.

**FORMATION:** The past personal verbs are formed by suffixation. In most cases, a suffix indicating the person-number-gender of the doer of the action is added directly to the past/completive stem of the verb. In some cases, an, in, or icin follows the stem and precedes the PNG.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The traditional term for “finite verbs” is vinaimurru ‘action-completeness.’

<sup>2</sup> In some contexts, the affixes an and in seem to mark a “present perfect” action, but in most cases do not. Therefore, they could be considered as cāriyai “inflectional increments” after the traditional grammarians. For more on an and in, see “The Past Stem,” “Notes on Miscellaneous Items,” P.S. Subrahmanyam (1971:108), and Zvelebil (1967:32).

The affix icin is taken by modern scholars as containing traces of \*c as a past

See “The Past Stem” and “Person-Number-Gender” for information on the past stem and the PNG categories.

PNG for past affirmative personal verbs

1st person singular: **an**, **en**, **ēn**, **icin**

1st person plural, honorific: **am**, **ām**, **ikum**, **em**, **ēm**

2nd person singular: **atai**, **avai**, **āy**, **icin**, **ai**, **ōy**

2nd person plural, honorific: **ir**, **īr**

3rd person masculine singular: **an**, **ān**, **ōn**

3rd person feminine singular: **aḷ**, **āl**, **ōḷ**

3rd person human plural, honorific: **ar**, **ār**, **ōr**

3rd person neuter singular: **atu**, **atai**, **icin**, **tu**

3rd person neuter plural: **a**

---

marker (cf. P.S. Subrahmanyam, 1971:221-224). T.P. Meenakshisundaran (1965:85) says that “it is difficult to say what was the original grammatical significance of this **icin**.”

In classical Tamil, **icin** occurs in the first person, second person, and third person verb forms denoting “past/completive” and “non-past/non-completive” actions. It follows the past stem when the completive aspect is indicated, and the bare verb stem otherwise. In most cases, it serves as a PNG suffix, and very rarely precedes the PNG suffix or the particle **āṅku**: *iru nilam miḷirnticināāṅku* ‘as if the vast earth was stirred up’ (*puṛa.139:13*). Note that in this context, it functions in a way similar to the PNG suffix **atu**. Therefore, this study treats **icin** as a PNG suffix. This treatment will not harm the reader’s understanding of classical Tamil poetry. See also “Notes on Miscellaneous Items.”

## EXAMPLES

**Formation mechanism:** past stem ± an/icin/in + PNG. When the affix icin follows the past stem, the PNG begins with the vowel ō. When icin serves as the PNG, it is added directly to the past stem.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In the examples here and elsewhere where similar examples are given, I have treated the stem form which precedes the affix in as the past stem ending with i or y (e.g., vēṇṭinam < vēṇṭi + in + am; tāyina < tāy + in + a). Some might prefer to derive such forms from a root to which in is added as the past tense marker (e.g., vēṇṭu + in + am; cf. Hart & Hart 1979:118) or from a past stem ending with i, followed by a hiatus-filler n, as for example, vēṇṭi past stem + n hiatus filler + am PNG (cf. Zvelebil 1967:100, note 70).

I have treated the in occurring in these contexts as an affix (“inflectional increment”) intervening between the past stem (vēṇṭi) and the PNG suffix (am) because it occurs in the same place as the affix an, which occurs after certain other kinds of past/completive stems (e.g., kaṭintanam ‘we avoided’ < kaṭint past/completive stem + an + am PNG). This way, we can have a neat pattern of describing the past personal verb: past stem + an/in + PNG.

Also I find that certain classical Tamil forms have retained both the past marker i and the affix in: kavaiiyinaḷ ‘she embraced’ < kavai ‘to split up like a fork; hug; embrace’ + i past/completive marker + y glide + in + aḷ PNG (*kuṟu*.359:6; *aiṅk*.409:2); taḷiyyinan ‘he hugged’ < taḷu ‘to hug’ + i past/completive marker + y glide + in + an PNG (*kuṟu*.359:5). Compare kavai nā ‘split tongue’ (*puṟa*.382:13) to get the meaning of kavai. In these examples, kavaiiyinaḷ and taḷiyyinan, even the meter of the poems does not come into play in retaining both i and in. Therefore, I took i as the past marker and in as the affix following it.

Some classical Tamil forms encouraged me to treat the y as the past marker, not as a glide, in contexts when it precedes the affix in: pāyinru ‘it spread’ < pā ‘to spread’ + y past/completive marker + in + tu PNG (*aka*.312:14) vs. pāvinru ‘there is / will be no spreading (of lovesick pallor)’ < pā ‘spreading’ + v glide + inru ‘there is not’ (*aka*.172:18). The former of these two forms certainly contains y, the past marker, whereas the latter does not. One cannot treat the y here as a glide, because the glide y never occurs between the past marker and the root/stem, if one were to treat the i as the past marker occurring after y. Some may consider the stem here to be pāy instead of pā (cf. Zvelebil 1967:28; 2.5.1 where he considers pāy in *narr*.347:2 as the verb stem). But then, the form pāvinru ‘there is / will be no spreading (of lovesick pallor)’ would not yield the stem pāy, nor can

## PNG      *Structure and Example*

**a:**    (3rd person neuter plural)

(past stem + a)

in̄iya ceytu nin̄ru pin̄ mun̄ivu ceyta ivaḷ taṭa meṇ tōḷē (*aink.143:2-3*)

[cey ‘to do’; ceyta < ceyt + a; mun̄ivu ‘frustration’;

mun̄ivu cey ‘to frustrate’]

‘Her curvaceous soft shoulders did sweet things first and remained (that way), and then **frustrated** me.’

(past stem + glide + a)

tol nilai val̄iia nin̄ toṭi

(*narr.332:3-4*)

[val̄u ‘to slip’; val̄iia < val̄i + y + a]

‘Your bracelets **slipped** from their original place.’

eṇ ... mun̄kai n̄n̄kiya vaḷaiyē

(*aink.163:3-4*)

[n̄n̄ku ‘to depart’; n̄n̄kiya < n̄n̄ki + y + a]

‘The bracelets **left** my forearm (wrist).’

---

one derive **pāvin̄ru** from **pāy** + **in̄ru**. Taking these facts into consideration, I took the **y** as the past/completive marker in contexts like **pāvin̄ru** and **tāyina** (given below in the examples). The **y** occurs as past/completive marker in stems which have open syllables and end with a long vowel or a short vowel other than **u**.

Similarly, consider **ninaiyin̄ai** ‘you have been thinking’ (*aka.379:5*) vs. **ninaivin̄ai** ‘you, having the thought’ (*aka.39:18*). The form **ninaiyin̄ai** certainly exhibits **y** as its past/completive marker while **ninaivin̄ai** is derived from **ninaivu** ‘memory, thought’ + **in̄** + **ai** PNG.

See “The Past Stem” for specific examples manifesting **y** as the past/completive marker.

(past stem + **an** + **a**)kaḷavum **puḷittana**

(aka.394:1)

[puḷi 'to turn sour'; **puḷittana** < **puḷitt** + **an** + **a**]'The kaḷa fruits also have **turned sour**.'(past stem + **in** + **a**)viḷavum **paḷunina**

(aka.394:1)

[paḷun 'to mature, ripen'; **paḷunina** < **paḷuni** + **in** + **a**]'The viḷa fruits **are mature** too.'āru vaṇappu eyta alar **tāyina**

(aink.483:1)

[tā 'to spread'; **tāyina** < **tāy** + **in** + **a**]'The flowers **spread** and (so) the path attained beauty.'**atu**: (3rd person neuter singular)(past stem + **atu**)neñcam ... taḷar aṭi tāṅkiya **cenratu inrē**

(aka.128:6, 15)

[cel 'to leave for a destination'; **cenratu** < **cenr** + **atu**]'My heart **left** today in order to hold (his) staggering feet' (on the mountain path).'**atai**: It may be understood as consisting of two suffixes **atu** and **ai**.

(2nd person singular)

(past stem + **atai**)nī kaḷariya **vantatai**

(kali.76:13)

[var 'to come'; **vantatai** < **vant** + **atai**]'You **arrived** disputing (me).'(The form **vantatai** is similar to **vantaṇai** 'you came' (kuru.355:5), and therefore one may be tempted to analyze it as **vant** + **at** + **ai**.)

But no satisfactory identification of **at** as an affix could be made, unless it is a scribal error misrepresenting **an**)

(3rd person neuter singular)

(past stem + **atai**)

**puṇai puṇai ēra t tāl̥ttatai** (pari.6:68)

[tāl̥ 'to delay'; tāl̥ttatai < tāl̥tt + atai]

'There was a delay to get on the decorated raft.'

(There would be no problem analyzing this form as tāl̥tt + atu + ai.)

**am:** (1st person honorific/plural)

(past stem + **an** + **am**)

**kaṭintanam celavē** (aka.5:26)

[kaṭi 'to avoid'; kaṭintanam < kaṭint + an + am]

'We avoided the departure.'

**nannar naṇmoḷi kēṭṭanam** (mull:17)

[kēḷ 'to hear; be audible'; kēṭṭanam < kēṭṭ + an + am]

'We heard lovely good words.'

(past stem + **in** + **am**)

**muyaṅkal yām vēṇṭinamē** (aka.26:15)

[vēṇṭu 'to wish for'; vēṇṭinam < vēṇṭi + in + am]

'We wished for (his) embracing.'

**ar:** (3rd person honorific/plural)

(past stem + **an** + **ar**)

**piriyalam eṇṇa col tām marantanar kollō** (aka.1:6-7)

[**maṛa** 'to forget'; **maṛantaṇar** < **maṛant** + **aṇ** + **ar**]

'Did he forget, I wonder, the word (he gave me) that we will not be separated?'

māl varai **varaintaṇar** emarē

(*pura.151:12*)

[**varai** 'to delimit, choose, select';

**varaintaṇar** < **varaint** + **aṇ** + **ar**]

'Our kin selected the dark mountain.'

kaṇicci pōl kōṭu cī ēṛu toḷūu p **pukuttaṇar**

(*kali.101:8-9*)

[**pukuttu** 'to make enter'; **pukuttaṇar** < **pukutt** + **aṇ** + **ar**]

'They sharpened the horns of the bull (to the form of) a trident and made them enter the stall.'

(past stem + **iṇ** + **ar**)

tiruntu vēl nākaṇ **kūriṇar** palarē

(*pura.179:12*)

[**kūru** 'to state, talk about'; **kūriṇar** < **kūri** + **iṇ** + **ar**]

'Many people mentioned Nākaṇ, with a perfect spear.'

**avai**: (2nd person singular)

(past stem + **iṇ** + **avai**)

calampuri taṇṭu **ēntiṇavai**

(*pari.15:58*)

[**ēntu** 'to hold upward'; **ēntiṇavai** < **ēnti** + **iṇ** + **avai**]

'You carried a club (that would perform acts) of fury.'

**aḷ**: (3rd person feminine singular)

(past stem + **aḷ**)

avaṇai āku eṇa **ēyaḷ** maṇ yāyum

(*naṛr.134:5-6*)



[ē ‘to command, order’; ēyaḷ < ēy + aḷ]  
 ‘Mother also **commanded** “Be there.”’

(past stem + **an** + aḷ)

oṇṭoṭi arivai koṇṭaṇaḷ neñcē (aṅk.172:1)  
 [koḷ ‘to take hold’; koṇṭaṇaḷ < koṇṭ + an + aḷ]  
 ‘The young woman with bright bracelets **took hold of** my heart.’

(past stem + **in** + aḷ)

ivaḷē ... āṇātu aḷaḷ toṭaṅkiṇaḷē (aka.120:6, 8-9)  
 [toṭaṅku ‘to begin a process’; toṭaṅkiṇaḷ < toṭaṅki + in + aḷ]  
 ‘She **started** crying relentlessly.’

paḷ viyar am tukil talaiyil tuṭaiyiṇaḷ (narr.120:7-8)  
 [tuṭai ‘to wipe’; tuṭaiyiṇaḷ < tuṭai + in + aḷ]  
 ‘She **wiped** her sweat with the end of her fine clothing.’

(past stem + glide + **in** + aḷ)

viṇalavaṇ putalvaṇ tāy avaṇ puṇam kavaiyiṇaḷē (kuru.359:5-6)  
 [kavai ‘to embrace’; kavaiyiṇaḷ < kavai + glide y + in + aḷ]  
 ‘The mother of the child of the triumphant one **hugged** his back.’

paṇṭum iṇaiyaiyō eṇa viṇaviṇaḷ yāyē (narr.55:6-7)  
 [viṇa ‘to enquire’; viṇaviṇaḷ < viṇa + glide v + in + aḷ]  
 ‘“Were you like this in the past too?,” **enquired** my mother.’

**an**: (1st person singular)

(past stem + **an** + an)

yāṇ kaṇṭaṇan (pura.85:8)

[**kāṇ** 'to see'; **kaṇṭaṇaṇ** < **kaṇṭ** + **an** + **an**]  
 'I saw.'

(past stem + **in** + **an**)

**yāṇ toṭaṅkinaṇ** (aiṅk.428:4)  
 [**toṭaṅku** 'to begin a process'; **toṭaṅkinaṇ** < **toṭaṅki** + **in** + **an**]  
 'I began ... .'

(3rd person masculine singular)

(past stem + **an** + **an**)

**āṅku c ceypa ellām ceytanaṇ** (pura.239:18-19)  
 [**cey** 'to do'; **ceytanaṇ** < **ceyt** + **an** + **an**]  
 'Thus, he did all that had to be done.'

**pāṇ uvappa p paci tīrttanaṇ** (pura.239:17)  
 [**tīr** 'to vanish; to remove, cure'; **tīrttanaṇ** < **tīrtt** + **an** + **an**]  
 'He removed/cured the bards' hunger as they were delighted.'

**uyarntōr ulakattu p peyarntanaṇ** (pura.174:20)  
 [**peyar** 'to move'; **peyarntanaṇ** < **peyarnt** + **an** + **an**]  
 'He moved toward the world of the nobles.'  
 'He proceeded toward the world of the nobles.'

(past stem + **in** + **an**)

**varu paṭai etir tāṅkinaṇ** (pura.239:11)  
 [**tāṅku** 'to bear, hold back'; **tāṅkinaṇ** < **tāṅki** + **in** + **an**]  
 'He held the upcoming army.'

(past stem + glide + in + an)

putalvaṇ taḷiiyinaṇ

(*kuṛu.359:5*)

[taḷu ‘to hug’; taḷiiyinaṇ < taḷi + y + in + an]

‘He hugged his son.’

**ām:** (1st person plural/honorific)

(past stem + ām)

karantatūum kaiyoṭu kōṭpaṭṭām

(*kali.115:3*)

[kōṭpaṭṭām < kōṭpaṭṭ + ām;

kōṭpaṭṭ past stem < kōḷpaṭu ‘to fall within one’s hold, be caught’  
< kōḷ + paṭu]

‘We were caught with what we concealed.’

‘We were caught red-handed.’

**āy:** (2nd person singular)

(past stem + āy)

niṇ pākaṇum nīṭṭittāy eṇṇu kaṭāam kaṭum tiṇ tēr (*kali.66:23-24*)

[nīṭṭi ‘to extend, delay’; nīṭṭittāy < nīṭṭitt + āy]

‘Your charioteer also would hasten your strong chariot because **you delayed.**’

(It is quite conceivable that nīṭṭi is itself a past/completive form [adverbial participle] < nīṭṭu ‘to extend’ + i, serving as a base for adding further suffixes.)

(past stem + in + āy)

ai vakai pārāṭṭināy

(*kali.22:13*)

[pārāṭṭu ‘to praise, appreciate’; pārāṭṭināy < pārāṭṭi + in + āy]

‘You praised (my) five-part (tresses).’

**ār:** (3rd person honorific/plural)

(past stem + **ār**)

terumantu **cāyttār** talai (kali.39:25)

[**cāy** 'to stoop, bend down, bow'; **cāyttār** < **cāytt** + **ār**]

'My relatives were baffled and bowed their heads.'

(past stem + **in** + **ār**)

cila makaḷir marṛu atarku **ūṭinār** vaiyai akattu (pari.20:66-67)

[**ūṭu** 'to sulk, chide'; **ūṭinār** < **ūṭi** + **in** + **ār**]

'A few women responded to that and chided (her) at (the river) Vaiyai.'

**āl:** (3rd person feminine singular)

(past stem + **āl**)

eṇ aiyarkku uyttu **uraittāl** yāy (kali.39:21)

[**urai** 'to inform, tell'; **uraittāl** < **uraitt** + **āl**]

'My mother told my chief men (i.e., brother and father) persuasively.'

'My mother persuaded my chief men (i.e., brother and father).'

(past stem + **in** + **āl**)

puṛaṅkaṭai p pōyināl (kali.115:12)

[**pō** 'to go'; **pōyināl** < **pōy** + **in** + **āl**]

'She went to the back yard.'

**ān:** (3rd person masculine singular)

(past stem + **ān**)

aṇṇai ōmpiya āynalam eṇ ai **koṇṭān** (kuru.223:6-7)

[**koḷ** 'to take hold'; **koṇṭān** < **koṇṭ** + **ān**]

‘My man/lover **took** (possession of my) fine loveliness which my mother had shielded/protected.’

(past stem + **in** + **ān**)

uṇṇu nīr **vikkinān**

(*kali.51:13*)

[**vikku** ‘to hiccup’; **vikkinān** < **vikki** + **in** + **ān**]

‘He **hiccoughed** for drinking water.’

**ikum**: (1st person plural/honorific)

(past stem + **ikum**)

nin ... taṭakkai irappōrkku k kavital allatai iraiya malarpu aṟiyā  
eṇak **kēṭṭikum** (*pati.52:10-12*)

[**kēl** ‘to hear’; **kēṭṭikum** < **kēṭṭ** + **ikum**]

‘We **heard** that except for bending/closing down (while giving) for the suppliants, your strong hands do not know to open up for begging.’

**icin**:

(1st person singular)

(past stem + **icin**)

aruvi cūṭiya uyar varaikku ūṇkaṇṇaḥtu em ūr eṇa āṇku atai aṟivuṟal  
**maṟanticin** yāṇē (*aka.38:16-18*)

[**maṟa** ‘to forget’; **maṟanticin** < **maṟant** + **icin**]

‘I **forgot** to let (him) know that our town is beyond the tall mountain which has a waterfall on its top.’

(2nd person singular)

(past stem + **icin**)

paṇmāṇ uraittal **ānricin** nīyē

(*narr.332:4-5*)

[**ān** ‘to be content with’; **ānricin** < **ānr** + **icin**]

**‘Stop saying that many times.’**  
**‘Stop saying that again and again.’**

(3rd person neuter singular)

(past stem + **icin**)

**kāṇam tiṇṇiya malai pōṇricinē** (*narr.240:10*)  
**[pōl ‘to resemble, be similar’; pōṇricin < pōṇr + icin]**  
**‘The jungle is like a dense mountain.’**

**ir:** (2nd person plural/honorific)

(past stem + **ir**)

**innum tam eṇa emmaṇōr irappin munnum koṇṭir eṇa nummaṇōr**  
**maṇuttal inṇātu** (*pura.203:4-6*)  
**[koḷ ‘to receive’; koṇṭir < koṇṭ + ir]**  
**‘When people like us beg you to give more, it is cruel to refuse**  
**saying “You received (gifts) previously too.” ’**

(past stem + **an** + **ir**)

**nallōrkku ottanir nīyir** (*aka.26:19*)  
**[o ‘to be equal to, be fit for, agreeable’; ottanir < ott + an + ir]**  
**‘You are agreeable to lovely women.’**

(past stem + **in** + **ir**)

**āritai ... poruḷ taral vēṭkaiyiṇ uḷḷinir eṇpatu aṇintaṇaḷ eṇ tōḷi** (*kali.4:6-8*)  
**[uḷḷu ‘to think of, consider’; uḷḷinir < uḷḷi + in + ir]**  
**‘My (female) companion understood that you thought of (going**  
**through) the difficult path because of your desire to bring wealth.’**

**īr:** (2nd person plural)

(past stem + **īr**)

ellīrum eṇ ceytīr

(*kali.142:15*)

[**cey** ‘to do’; **ceytīr** < **ceyt** + **īr**]

‘What **did** you all **do**?’

**em:** (1st person honorific/plural)

(past stem + **an** + **em**)

ūraṇ kēṇmai ceytu **inpurranem**

(*kuṛu.61:5-6*)

[**inpuṛu** ‘to attain pleasure’ < **inpu** + **uṛu**;

**inpurranem** < **inpur** + **an** + **em**]

‘We **were** **delighted** making friendship with the Ūraṇ.’

(past stem + **in** + **em**)

kāvinem kalaṇē curukkinem kalappai

(*pura.206:10*)

[**kā** ‘to lift by hanging’; **curukku** ‘to draw tight’;

**kāvinem** < **kāvi** + **in** + **em**;

**curukkinem** < **curukki** + **in** + **em**]

‘We **have** **lifted** our pots; we **have** **tied up** our bags of musical instruments.’

**en:** (1st person singular)

(past stem + **en**)

toṭutten makilna cellal

(*aka.396:1*)

[**toṭu** ‘to grab, get hold of, to hook’; **toṭutten** < **toṭutt** + **en**]

‘I **got hold** of you, Makilna, do not leave.’

(past stem + **an** + **en**)yāṇar naṇ maṇai k kūṭṭu mutal **ninṛanen** (*pura.376:6*)[**niḷ** 'to stand'; **ninṛanen** < **ninr** + **an** + **en**]

'I stood in front of the barn in the good bounteous house.'

niṇṇ nayantu **vantanen**(*pati.55:2*)[**var** 'to come'; **vantanen** < **vant** + **an** + **en**]

'I have came (with a) liking (for) you.'

(past stem + **in** + **en**)avar nāṭṭu k kuṇṛam **nōkkinen** tōḷi(*kurū.249:3-4*)[**nōkku** 'to look at'; **nōkkinen** < **nōkki** + **in** + **en**]

'My friend, I looked at the hill in his country.'

**ēm**: (1st person plural/honorific)(past stem + **ēm**)ūraṇ kēṇmai vaḷi vaḷi c ciṛakka eṇa **vēṭṭēmē**(*aiṇk.2:5-6*)[**vēḷ** 'to wish for'; **vēṭṭēm** < **vēṭṭ** + **ēm**]

'We wished/prayed that our friendship with the Ūraṇ thrives for ever and ever.'

(past stem + **in** + **ēm**)**onrinēn** yām(*kali.86:15*)[**onru** 'to unite'; **onrinēm** < **onri** + **in** + **ēm**]

'We are united.'



**ēn:** (1st person singular)

(past stem + **ēn**)

maṭavaral tāyar enṇūm peyarē vallāru **eṭuttēn** maṇṇa yāṇē koṭuttōr  
maṇṇa aval āyattōrē (aink.380:2-5)

[**eṭu** ‘to take, acquire’; **peyar eṭu** ‘to gain/raise a reputation’; **eṭuttēn**  
< **eṭutt** + **ēn**]

‘Alas! By hard means, I only **got** the reputation that I am the innocent girl’s mother, while her group of friends (had the privilege of) giving her away (in marriage to her lover).’

nin perum peyar ētti **vantēn** peruma (peru:460-461)

[**var** ‘to come’; **vantēn** < **vant** + **ēn**]

‘Lord, I **came** praising your great name.’

(past stem + glide + **ēn**)

neṭuṅkaṭai t **tōnriyēnē** (puṛa.397:11)

[**tōnru** ‘to appear, show up’; **tōnriyēn** < **tōnri** + glide **y** + **ēn**]

‘I **appeared** at the tall door.’

(past stem + **an** + **ēn**)

ninṇai t **takaittanēn** (kali.108:20)

[**takai** ‘to stop’; **takaittanēn** < **takaitt** + **an** + **ēn**]

‘I **am stopping** you.’

‘I **have stopped** you.’

(past stem + **in** + **ēn**)

matiyam nōkki ninṇu ninaintu **uḷḷinēn** allaṇō yāṇē (narr.62:4, 5)

[**uḷḷu** ‘to remember’; **uḷḷinēn** < **uḷḷi** + **in** + **ēn**]

‘Looking at the moon, **did** I not stop, think, and **remember** that ...?’

**ai:** (2nd person singular)

(past stem + **an** + **ai**)

ātal niṇ akattu aṭakki c cātal niṇka emakku **ittanaiyē** (*pura.91:10-11*)

[**i** ‘to give, bestow’; **ittanai** < **itt** + **an** + **ai**; **ā** ‘to be’;

**cā** ‘to become weary’]

‘You concealed the (fact of) thriving within yourself and gave (the fruit) to me so my weariness would leave.’

(past stem + **in** + **ai**)

eṇava kēlāy **ninaiyinai** nī naṇi (*narr.253:4*)

[**ninai** ‘to ponder/think’; **ninaiyinai** < **ninaiy** + **in** + **ai**]

‘You thought too much without listening to (words of) mine.’

**ōy:** (2nd person singular)

(past stem + **ōy**)

iraviṇ **vantōy** (*aka.80:2, 3*)

[**var** ‘to come’; **vantōy** < **vant** + **ōy**]

‘You came at night.’

(past stem + glide + **ōy**)

mā vicumpu oluku puṇal vaṇaḷa aṇṇa c cēvalāy c ciṇakar p **pularttiyōy**

(*pari.3:25-26*)

[**pularttu** ‘to make dry’; **pularttiyōy** < **pulartti** + **y** + **ōy**]

‘You, in the form of a gander, dried up the rain water flowing in the vast skies with your wings.’

**ōr:** (3rd person honorific/plural)

(past stem + **ōr**)

iḷa nāl amaiyam ceytōr maṇṇa kuṇi (*aka.25:12-13*)

[**cey** ‘to do’; **ceytōr** < **ceyt** + **ōr**]

‘He clearly set the time of young/early spring for his return.’

tāyar eṇṇum peyarē vallāru eṭuttēṇ maṇṇa yāṇē koṭuttōr maṇṇa  
avaḷ āyattōrē (aink.380:3-5)

[**koṭu** ‘to give away’; **koṭuttōr** < **koṭutt** + **ōr**]

‘Alas! By hard means, I only got the reputation that I am the innocent girl’s mother, while her group of friends (had the privilege of) giving her away (in marriage to her lover).’

**ōḷ**: (3rd person feminine singular)

(past stem + glide + **ōḷ**)

akamali uvakaiyaḷ āki muṇaṇ ikuttu oyyeṇa iraiñciyōḷe  
(aka.86:28-29)

[**iraiñcu** ‘to stoop, bow’; **iraiñciyōḷ** < **iraiñci** + glide **y** + **ōḷ**]

‘She was full of happiness that filled her heart. She stooped her face and bowed suddenly.’

**ōṇ**: (3rd person masculine singular)

(past stem + glide + **ōṇ**)

iravalar iṇaiya vārā c cēṭpulam paṭarntōṇ (pati.61:9-10)

[**paṭar** ‘to proceed, move on to’; **paṭarntōṇ** < **paṭarnt** + **ōṇ**]

‘He proceeded to a faraway land, as the suppliants grieved.’

(past stem + glide + **ōṇ**)

paṇṇirai ūrtiyoṭu nalkiyōṇ (pura.399:31-32)

[**nalku** ‘to give, provide’; **nalkiyōṇ** < **nalki** + glide **y** + **ōṇ**]

‘He gave away many cattle with a cart.’

(past stem + **icin** + **ōn**)

peruntēr paṇṇi em muṇ katai niṛī c **cenricinōnē** (*narr.300:5-6*)

[cel 'to leave for a destination'; **cenricinōn** < **cenr** + **icin** + **ōn**]

'He decorated his big chariot, parked it at our front door, and left.'

(Note that here **icin** precedes the PNG.)

**tu**: (3rd person neuter singular)

(past stem + **an** + **tu**)

ev ūr **ninranru** makilna niṇ tērē (*aink.62:4*)

[niṇ 'to stand, stay'; **ninranru** < **ninr** + **an** + **tu**]

'Makilna (O man of pleasure), in which town is your chariot standing?'

(past stem + **in** + **tu**)

paipaya c cuṭarum **curuṇkinru** oḷiyē (*pura.397:3-4*)

[**curuṇku** 'to withdraw, dwindle'; **curuṇkinru** < **curuṇki** + **in** + **tu**]

'The rays (of the sun) too have slowly withdrawn their light.'

kūntal kutiraiyai vāy pakuttiṭṭu p puṭaitta ṇāṇru inṇaṇ kol māyōṇ

enru **uṭkirru** en neṇcu (*kali.103:53-55*)

[**uṭku** 'to be frightened'; **uṭkirru** < **uṭki** + **in** + **tu**]

'When he split open the demon named Kūntal, who was in the form of a horse, and beat him up, my heart was frightened thinking "Is Māyōṇ (Vishnu) of this nature?"'

**tāyirrē** taṇ am puṇal

(*pari.6:10*)

[**tā** 'to spread'; **tāyirru** < **tāy** + **in** + **tu**;

**tāyirrē** < **tāyirru** + **ē** particle]

'The beautiful cool flood spread.'

## NON-PAST PERSONAL VERBS

**GENERAL:** See “Past Personal Verbs” for general information on personal verbs. The action indicated by the non-past personal verbs might be ongoing or forthcoming.

**FORMATION:** The non-past personal verbs are formed by suffixation. A suffix indicating the person-number-gender of the doer/creator of the action/state is added to the non-past/non-completive stem of the verb. Very rarely the affix **an** intervenes between the non-past/non-completive stem and the PNG suffix. See “The Past Stem” and “Notes on Miscellaneous Items” for more on **an**. See “The Non-Past Stem” and “Person-Number-Gender” for information on the non-past stem and the PNG categories.

### PNG for non-past affirmative finite verbs

1st person singular: **al, an, en, ēn, u**

1st person plural, honorific: **am, ām, um, ēm, ōm**

2nd person singular: **āy, i, ī, ai**

2nd person plural, honorific: **ir, ĩr**  
 3rd person masculine singular: **an, ān, um**  
 3rd person feminine singular: **aḷ, āḷ, uin**  
 3rd person human plural, honorific: **a, ar, ār**  
 3rd person neuter singular: **atu, (u)m, untu**<sup>1</sup>  
 3rd person neuter plural: **a, um**

### EXAMPLES

Formation Mechanism: non-past stem ± **an** + PNG

*PNG            Structure and Example*

**a:**

(3rd person honorific/plural)

(non-past stem + **a**)

**enṛum cāṇṛōr cāṇṛōr pālar āpa cālār cālār pālar ākupa**

(*pura.218:5-7*)

[**āpa** < **āp** + **a**; **ākupa** < **ākup** + **a**]

‘Always, the noble ones **will belong** in the group of the noble ones.  
 And those who are not noble **will belong** in the group of those who  
 are not noble.’

**pacantu nī iṇaiyaiyāy nīttalum nīppavō**

(*kali.150:10*)

[**nī** ‘to depart, forsake’; **nīppa** < **nīpp** + **a**]

‘While you are pale like this, **will he** even dare to **forsake** (you)?’

<sup>1</sup> Actually, **untu** contains two suffixes: **um** and **tu**. However, Tolkāppiyam says that **um** “becomes” **untu**: cf. Tolkāppiyam, collatikāram, Cēṇāvaraiyam, Rule 292.

maṟumai ulakamum maṟu iṇṟu **eytupa** ceṟunarum viḷaiyum ceyir tīr  
 kāṭci c ciṟuvar p payanta cemmalōr (aka.66:2-4)

[**eytu** ‘to attain’; **eytupa** < **eytup** + **a**]

‘The noble people, who have begotten children whom even the adversaries like, **will attain** even the other world without mistake.’

(3rd person neuter plural)

(non-past stem + **a**)

puṭṭilul **en uḷa** (kali.117:8)

[**uḷ** ‘to exist’; **uḷa** < **uḷ** + **a**; **en** ‘what?’]

‘**What are** (the things) in this quiver?’

kaṇ paṇi **kalulpavāl** (kali.48:15)

[**kalul** ‘to emit tears’; **kalulpa** < **kalulp** + **a**]

‘(Her) eyes **emit** tears.’

porulē ... ōṭu mīṇ valiyiṇ **keṭuva** (narr.16:4, 6)

[**keṭu** ‘to disappear, perish’; **keṭuva** < **keṭuv** + **a**]

‘Wealth **will disappear** like the path of a moving fish.’

(non-past stem + glide + **a**)

kaṇṇum **paṭukuva** maṇṇē (aka.11:15)

[**paṭu** ‘to close (the eyes)’; **paṭukuva** < **paṭuku** + glide **v** + **a**]

‘(My) eyes **will also sleep**.’

(non-past stem + **an** + **a**)

am taḷir **takaippaṇa** (kali.3:17)

[**takai** ‘to stop, prevent’; **takaippaṇa** < **takaipp** + **an** + **a**]

‘The soft shoots/young leaves **will stop** (you).’

**atu:** (3rd person neuter singular)

(non-past stem + **atu**)

nōy uṟu vennīr telippin talai k koṇṭu **vēvatu** alittu iv ulaku  
(*kali.142:53-54*)

[**vē** < **ve** 'to steam'; **vēvatu** < **vēv** + **atu**]

'If (I) sprinkle the hot water of my passion, this world **will** take it upon its head and **steam** up; it is a poor world.'

**am:** (1st person honorific/plural)

(non-past stem + **am**)

yāmum **cērukam** nīyirum vammin (*pati.49:1*)

[**cel** 'to leave for a destination'; **cērukam** < **cēruk** + **am**]

'We **will** also go. You too come along.'

muṟuval inṇakai **kāṇkam** (*narr.81:9*)

[**kāṇ** 'to see'; **kāṇkam** < **kāṇk** + **am**]

'Let us / We **will** look at (her) sweet smile.'

añcuvam tamiyam (*aka.72:10*)

[**añcu** 'to be scared'; **añcuvam** < **añcuv** + **am**]

'We are alone. We **will** be scared.'

(non-past stem + glide + **am**)

ivaḷ putu nāṇ oṭukkamum **kāṇkuvam** yāmē (*aka.112:18-19*)

[**kāṇ** 'to see'; **kāṇkuvam** < **kāṇku** + glide **v** + **am**]

'Let us / We **will** look at her novel shyness.'



yāmum em varai aḷavaiyiṇ **peṭkuvam** (aka.200:12-13)  
 [peḷ ‘to care for’; **peṭkuvam** < **peṭkuv** + **am**]  
 ‘We too will care for (you) as much as we can.’

**ar**: (3rd person honorific/plural)

(non-past stem + **ar**)

putu p puṇal niṇṇai k koṇṭu īrttu uyppa k kaṇṭār **uḷar** (kali.98:25-26)  
 [uḷ ‘to exist’]  
 ‘There are people who saw as the new flood drew you and dragged away.’

nī ceṇṇī emar **kāṇpar** (kali.110:22)  
 [kāṇ ‘to see’; **kāṇpar** < **kāṇp** + **ar**]  
 ‘You just leave. (Otherwise) our kin will see (you).’

niṇ naṇu nutal **maṇapparō** (kuru.59:3-4)  
 [maṇa ‘to forget’; **maṇappar** < **maṇapp** + **ar**]  
 ‘Will he forget your good-smelling forehead?’

**varuvar** ... tōḷi (aka.111:3)  
 [var ‘to come’; **varuvar** < **varuv** + **ar**]  
 ‘He will come (back), my friend!’

mātar makaḷirum maintarum ... **ayarvar** taḷūu (kali.103:61-62)  
 [ayar ‘to celebrate’; **ayarvar** < **ayarv** + **ar**]  
 ‘Lovable women and strong young men celebrate the bull raid.’

(non-past stem + glide + ar)

pukaḷ eṇiṇ uyirum koṭukkuvar (pura.182:5)

[koṭu 'to give away'; koṭukkuvar &lt; koṭukku + glide v + ar]

'If it is (for) fame, they will even give their lives.'

muyakkam avarum perukuvar (aka.11:10-11)

[peru 'to get'; perukuvar &lt; peruku + glide v + ar]

'He too will get to embrace (me).'

al: (1st person singular)

(non-past stem + al)

eyyāy āyiṇum uraiṇṇal tōḷi (aka.28:2)

[urai 'to tell'; uraiṇṇal &lt; uraiṇṇ + al]

'Even if you may not understand, I will tell you, my friend!'

pal yāṇai kāṇṇal avan tāṇaiyāṇē (pati.77:11-12)

[kāṇ 'to see'; kāṇṇal &lt; kāṇṇ + al]

'I see many elephants in his cavalry.'

iṇṇum vāḷval eṇ itaṇ paṇṇē (pura.245:7)

[vāḷ 'to live'; vāḷval &lt; vāḷv + al]

'I am still living. What is its nature?'

nummoṭu varuval eṇṇi (narr.162:6)

[var 'to come'; varuval &lt; varuv + al]

'You are saying "I shall come with you." '

(non-past stem + glide + aI)

mati maruḷa k **kāṇkuvaI** (pati.73:16)

[**kāṇ** 'to see'; **kāṇkuvaI** < **kāṇku** + glide **v** + **aI**]

'I see that (the enemies') intelligence is bewildered.'

**aI**: (3rd person feminine singular)

(non-past stem + **aI**)

iraviṇ varutaI aṛiyāṇ varum varum **enpaI** tōli yāyē (aink.272:4-5)

[**en** 'to say'; **enpaI** < **enp** + **aI**]

'He does not come at night (anymore). Friend, my mother says repeatedly that he does.'

vaṇṇamum vaṇappum variyum vāṭa **varuntuvaI** ivaI (aka.119:2-3)

[**varuntu** 'to grieve'; **varuntuvaI** < **varuntuv** + **aI**]

'She is grieving, as her complexion, beauty, and loveliness are wilting.'

taṇakku uraiṇṇu aṛiyēṇ **nāṇuvaI** ivaI eṇa (aka.203:5-6)

[**nāṇu** 'to feel shy, embarrassed'; **nāṇuvaI** < **nāṇuv** + **aI**]

'I do not know how to tell her, thinking that she will be embarrassed.'

kāmaṇēI viḷavu āyiṇ **kalaṇkuvaI** peritu (kali.27:24)

[**kalaṇku** 'to be agitated'; **kalaṇkuvaI** < **kalaṇkuv** + **aI**]

'She will be much agitated at the time of Kāmaṇ's festival.'

(non-past stem + glide + a|)

nammoṭu ... muyakkam peṇṇōl pōla **uvakkuva|** vāliya neñcē  
(aka.144:9-11)

[**uva** 'to rejoice, be delighted'; **uvakkuva|** < **uvakku** + glide **v** + **a|**]  
'She will rejoice as though she embraced me.'

**an:**

(1st person singular)

(non-past stem ± glide + **an**)

u| uṭaintu **u|anē** (narr.199:4-5)

[**u|** 'to exist; **u|an** < **u|** + **an**]  
'I exist with a broken heart.'

nōy eriyāka c cuṭiṇum cuḷarri eṇ āyital| uḷlē **karappan**  
(kali.142:51-52)

[**kara** 'to hide, conceal'; **karappan** < **karapp** + **an**]  
'Even if lovesickness burns me like fire, I will wrap it up and conceal it inside my fine eyelids.'

malai **akalkkuvanē** kaṭal **tūrkkuvanē** vāṇ **vīlkkuvanē** vaḷi  
**mārruvan** (paṭṭ:271-272)

[**aka|** 'to dig'; **tūr** 'to fill up'; **vī|** 'to fall'; **mārru** 'to make retreat'  
**akalkkuvan** < **akalkku** + glide **v** + **an**;  
**tūrkkuvan** < **tūrkku** + glide **v** + **an**;  
**vīlkkuvan** < **vīlkku** + glide **v** + **an**;  
**mārruvan** < **mārruv** + **an**]

'I will dig into the mountains; will fill up the sea; will make the sky fall; and will change (the course of) the wind.'

avala neñcamoṭu celvan (pura.210:13)

[cel 'to leave'; celvan < celv + an]

'I am leaving with a distressed heart.'

(3rd person masculine singular)

(non-past stem + an)

varuvan enra kōṇatu perumai (pura.217:7)

[var 'to come'; varuvan < varuv + an]

'the greatness of the king who said "He will come" '

(non-past stem + glide + an)

innē varukuvan oḷikka avaṛku iṭamē (pura.216:12)

[var 'to come'; varukuvan < varuku + glide v + an]

'He will come this very day. Reserve / Set aside a place for him.'

**ām:** (1st person honorific/plural)

(non-past stem + ām)

teruḷum maruḷum mayaṅki varupavaḷ kūrupa kēḷāmō ceṇru

(kali.144:7-8)

[kēḷ 'to hear, listen'; kēḷām < kēḷ + ām]

'Shall we go and listen to what she says when agitated between consciousness and confusion?'

aritē tōḷi nāṇ niruppām eṇru uṇartal (kali.137:1)

[niṛu 'to make stand, check, hold'; niruppām < niṛupp + ām]

'It is difficult, my friend, to be sure that we will contain our bashfulness.'

kāṭalar kāṭalum kāṇpām kollō (kali.36:20)

[kāṇ ‘to see’; kāṇpām < kāṇp + ām]

‘And shall we experience our lover’s love, I wonder?’

aivaṇa veṇṇel aṛai uraluḷ peytu iruvām (kali.43:4)

[iru ‘to pound’; iruvām < iruv + ām]

‘We shall pour the white paddy of aivaṇam into the mortar made of rock and pound.’

cellal tīrkkam celvām (narr.284:4)

[cel ‘to leave for a destination’; celvām < celv + ām]

‘We shall / Let us go and remove (her) distress.’

**āy:** (2nd person singular)

(non-past stem + āy)

ikaḷ malar k kaṇṇalā t turappāyāl (kali.135:13)

[tura ‘to renounce, detach’; turappāy < turapp + āy]

‘You are renouncing her, so her eyes (losing luster) are ridiculed by the flowers.’

‘You leave her and the flowers ridicule her lusterless eyes.’

atu poyppāy nī (kali.108:57)

[poy ‘to fail’; poyppāy < poypp + āy]

‘You will fail (in your promise).’

cey poruḷ murriya vaḷamaiyāṇ ākum poruḷ itu enpāy (kali.12:10-11)

[en ‘to say’; enpāy < enp + āy]

‘You are saying that the richness attained by seeking wealth is making this (enjoyment of love) possible.’

(non-past stem + glide + āy)

poruḷ vayiṇ pōkuvāy

(kali.12:17)

[pō ‘to go’; pōkuvāy < pōku + glide v + āy]<sup>2</sup>

‘You are going toward wealth.’

‘You are seeking wealth.’

**ār:** (3rd person honorific/plural)

(non-past stem + ār)

tūtu avar viṭutarār turappār kol

(kali.33:24)

[tura ‘to renounce, detach’; turappār < turapp + ār]

‘Will he renounce (me) without sending a message, I wonder?’

takavuṭai maṅkaiyar cāṇṇāmai cāṇṇār ikaḷiṇum kēḷvarai ētti

iraiṇcuvār

(pari.20:88-89)

[iraiṇcu ‘to bow’; iraiṇcuvār < iraiṇcuv + ār]

‘Women with good qualities, filled with nobility, will praise and bow to their husbands even if the husbands despise them.’

**āl:** (3rd person feminine singular)

(non-past stem + āl)

aṇṇaiyum ... eṇ mukam nōkkaṇaḷ evaṇ kol tōḷi celvāl eṇru kol

ceṇṇippal eṇru kol

(narr.206:6, 8-9)

[cel ‘to leave’; celvāl < celv + āl]

‘And mother looked at my face. What does it mean, my friend? Whether she will (turn to you and) say “She will leave (for the millet field)” or she will imprison me (at home)?’

<sup>2</sup> It is conceivable to derive it from the non-past stem **pokuv** + **āy** PNG.

poruḷ vayiṇ iṟatti nī eṇa k kēṭpiṇ ... oḷi **ōṭarpāl** maṇṇō (*kali.10:8-9*)  
 [ōṭu 'to run (away), disappear fast'; **ōṭarpāl** < **ōṭu** + **kirp** + **āl**]  
 'Will she lose her luster if she hears that you are leaving for the sake of (earning) wealth?'

**āṇ:** (3rd person masculine singular)

(non-past stem + **āṇ**)

yāṇṭu **oḷippāṇ** (*kali.146:31*)  
 [oḷi 'to hide'; **oḷippāṇ** < **oḷipp** + **āṇ**]  
 'Where is he hiding?'

vārātu **amaivāṇō** (*kali.41:28*)  
 [amai 'to stay calm, remain undisturbed']  
 'Will he be calm without coming (here)?'

pal kāl muttu aṇi āram paṛṇaṇ **parivāṇāl** (*kali.79:12*)  
 [pari 'to pull, sever'; **parivāṇ** < **pariv** + **āṇ**]  
 'He would grab and pull the necklace with many strands of pearls.'

(non-past stem + glide + **āṇ**)

mayil iyalār maruvuṇṭu marantu **amaikuvāṇ** (*kali. 30:6*)  
 [amai 'to stay calm, remain undisturbed';  
**amaikuvāṇ** < **amaiku** + glide **v** + **āṇ**]  
 'He stays calm forgetting (me) and enjoying the closeness of women who are like peacocks.'

**i:** (2nd person singular)

(non-past stem + **i**)

poruḷ vayiṇ **iṟatti nī** (*kali.10:8*)



[**īra** ‘to depart’; **īratti** < **iratt** + **i**]  
 ‘**You are departing** toward wealth.’  
 ‘You are leaving for the sake of (earning) wealth.’

**pulattiyāl emmē** (aka.39:25)  
 [**pula** ‘to sulk, be frustrated’; **pulatti** < **pulatt** + **i**]  
 ‘**You are sulking** with me.’

**mullaiyum pūttiyō** (puṛa.242:6)  
 [**pū** ‘to bloom’; **pūtti** < **pūtt** + **i**]  
 ‘O jasmine, **do you dare to bloom?**’  
 ‘O jasmine, have you dared to bloom?’

**vaṛumai aṇcuti** (aka.123:7)  
 [**aṇcu** ‘to fear’; **aṇcuti** < **aṇcut** + **i**]  
 ‘**You are afraid** of poverty.’

**poruḷ nōkki ... nī pōkuti** (kali.10:16)  
 [**pōku** ‘to go’; **pōkuti** < **pōkut** + **i**]  
 ‘**You are leaving**, seeking wealth.’

**veyiloṭu evaṇ viraintu cēri** (kali.108:39)  
 [**cel** ‘to leave for a destination’; **cēri** < **cel** + **t** + **i**;  
**virai** ‘to go fast’]  
 ‘**Why are you rushing** along with the (heat of the) sun?’

**ir:** (2nd person plural/honorific)

(non-past stem + **ir**)

**uyāṅkiṇaḷ eṇṛu āṅku ucātir** (kali.143:18)  
 [**ucā** ‘to enquire’; **ucātir** < **ucāt** + **ir**]  
 ‘**You are enquiring** about his wellbeing because she is grieving.’

i-c-curam aṛitalum aṛitirō (aka.8:17-18)  
 [aṛi 'to know'; aṛitir < aṛit + ir]  
 'Do you know this forest at all?'

kāṇam irappa eṇṇutir āyiṇ (aka.5:15-16)  
 [eṇṇu 'to think'; eṇṇutir < eṇṇut + ir]  
 'if you are thinking of passing through the jungle'

kaṇicci k kūrmpaṭai k kaṭuntirāl oruvaṇ piṇikkum kālai iraṅkuvir  
 mātō (pura.195:4-5)  
 [iraṅku 'to feel sorry, regret'; iraṅkuvir < iraṅkuv + ir]  
 'Alas, you will feel sorry when the strong powerful one (Death)  
 with the sharp weapon of a trident binds you.'

ī<sup>3</sup>: (2nd person singular)

(non-past stem + ī)

vīl nāṇ uḷartīyē (kali.7:6)  
 [uḷar 'to pluck'; uḷartī < uḷart + ī]  
 'You are plucking the cord of your bow.'

īr<sup>4</sup>: (2nd person honorific/plural)

(non-past stem + īr)

mayāṅkiṇāḷ eṇru maruḷtīr (kali.143:19)  
 [maruḷ 'to be confused'; maruḷtīr < maruḷt + īr]  
 'You are puzzled because she is agitated.'

<sup>3</sup> It is a variant of i.

<sup>4</sup> It is a variant of ir.

en ceytāl kol **enpīr** kēṭṭimin (kali.143:9)  
 [en ‘to say, ask’; **enpīr** < **enp** + **īr**]<sup>5</sup>  
 ‘You are asking “What did she do?” Please listen.’

niṇ urra allal urai eṇa eṇnai **viṇavuvīr** (kali.144:10-11)  
 [**viṇavu** ‘to enquire’; **viṇavuvīr** < **viṇavuv** + **īr**]  
 ‘You are asking me “Tell us (about) the distress you are experiencing.”’

**u:** (1st person singular)

(non-past stem + **u**)

tīṭinmai teyvattāl kaṇṭi **teḷikku** (kali.91:7-8)  
 [**teḷi** ‘to make clear, assure’; **teḷikku** < **teḷikk** + **u**]<sup>6</sup>  
 ‘See (my) harmlessness. I shall clarify it by (the name of) god.’

añcal ōmpu niṇ aṇi nalam **nukarku** (kuri:181)  
 [**nukar** ‘to enjoy’; **nukarku** < **nukark** + **u**]  
 ‘Stop being afraid. I shall / Let me enjoy your loveliness.’

**untu** (**um** + **tu**):

(3rd person neuter singular)

(non-past stem + **untu**)

kīḷ nīrāṇ mīṇ **vaḷaṅkuntu** (pura.396:1)  
 [**vaḷaṅku** ‘to move around’; **vaḷaṅkuntu** < **vaḷaṅku** + **um** + **tu**]  
 ‘The fish move around in low waters.’

<sup>5</sup> The literary context suggests that the form **enpīr** could be a participial noun.

<sup>6</sup> Some might consider the (k)ku itself, not just u, as the PNG.

**um:**

(1st person honorific/plural)

(non-past stem + **um**)em mutumai eḷḷal aḥtu **amaikum** (aka.6:14-15)

[amai 'to agree with, remain undisturbed';

**amaikum** < **amaik** + **um**]'Do not ridicule our old age; **we will remain undisturbed** about it.'nuntai viyaṇ mārpil ... taiiya kōtai paripu āṭa k **kāṇkum**

(kali.80:24, 25-26)

[kāṇ 'to see'; **kāṇkum** < **kāṇk** + **um**]

'We shall see you playing by pulling the garland worn on your father's wide chest.'

mella mella il **ākutum**

(kuru.290:6)

[āku 'to become'; **ākutum** < **ākut** + **um**]

'We are becoming / turning into nothing slowly.'

piḷaiyalal māṭō **piritum** nām eṇiṇē

(aka.5:28)

[piri 'to depart'; **piritum** < **pirit** + **um**]'Alas! If **we would depart** she will not survive.'yām avaṇiṇṇum **varutum**

(cīru.143)

[var 'to come'; **varutum** < **varut** + **um**]

'We are coming from there.'

yām niṇṇai **verūutum** kāṇum kaṭai

(kali.87:1-2)

[veru 'to shy away, shun'; **verūutum** < **veru** + **t** + **um**]

'We shun you when we see you.'

celva, cērum em tol pati p peyarntu (poru:121)  
 [cel 'to leave for a destination'; cērum < cel + t + um]  
 'Lord, we shall go / proceed toward our ancient city.'

(3rd person masculine singular)

(non-past stem + um)

aṛivutaṭaiyōṇ āru aracum cellum (pura.183:7)  
 [cel 'to go'; cellum < cel + um]  
 'Even the king will go in the path of the wise man.'

aṇṭiraṇ varūum (pura.241:2)  
 [var 'to come'; varūum < var + um]  
 '(The donor) Aṇṭiraṇ will come.'

tuyar ceystal peṇ aṇru puṇaiyiḷāy eṇa k kūri t tolūum (kali.60:6, 7)  
 [tolu 'to bow, worship'; tolūum < tolu + um]  
 'He would do obeisance to you saying "O one with ornaments, creating agony (of passion) is not a feminine virtue." '

kollaṇai irakkum tiruntilai neṭuvēl vaṭitticin eṇavē (pura.180:12-13)  
 [ira 'to beg, request'; irakkum < irakk + um]  
 'He would beg the blacksmith saying "Make a long spear with a perfect leaf/tip."

ampoṭu vēl nuḷai vaḷi ellām tāṇ niṛkum maṇṇē (pura.235:7)  
 [nil 'to stand, stay'; niṛkum < niṛk + um]  
 'He would stand up wherever arrows and spears enter.'

(3rd person feminine singular)

(non-past stem + um)

ivaḷum **tēmpum**

(*kuri*:26)

[**tēmpu** ‘to sob’; **tēmpum** < **tēmpu** + **um**]

‘She also is sobbing.’

(non-past stem + glide + um)

ciṛappiṇ pālāl tāyum maṇam **tiriyum**

(*pura*.183:4)

[**tiri** ‘to change, twist, whirl’; **tiriyum** < **tiri** + glide **y** + **um**]

‘Even mother **will change** her mind on account of eminence.’

(3rd person neuter singular)

(non-past stem + um)

vantu maturai matil **porūum** ... am taṇ puṇal vaiyai āṛu

(*pari*.12:9-10)

[**poru** ‘to dash against, fight back’; **porūum** < **poru** + **um**]

‘The beautiful cool flooded Vaiyai river is coming and **dashing** against the Madurai fortress.’

maññai ... naṇantalai pulampa k **kūum**

(*kuṛu*.391:7-9)

[**kū** ‘to call out’; **kūum** < **kū** + **um**]

‘The peacock is **screeching** as the vast region resounds.’

niṇṇai **viyakkum** iv ulakam

(*pura*.167:11)

[**viya** ‘to adore, admire’; **viyakkum** < **viyakk** + **um**]

‘This world **admires** you.’

nīṛ nīṭu āṭiṇ kaṇṇum civakkum āntōṛ vāyil tēṇum **puḷikkum**

(*kuṛu.354:1-2*)

[**puḷi** ‘to lose original quality, to change to a lower taste, become sour’; **puḷikkum** < **puḷikk** + **um**]

‘One’s eyes will turn red if one plays/bathes for long in the water. Even honey **will turn sour** in the mouths of those who have had it to the full.’

kal iṛantu ceyal cūḷnta poruḷ poruḷ **ākumō**

(*kali.2:16*)

[**ā** ‘to be’; **ākum** < **āk** + **um**]<sup>7</sup>

‘Will the wealth that you are planning to make by going beyond the mountain **be** (true) wealth?’

niṇ tēr pūṇṭa neṭu naṇ māṇ teṇ maṇi vantu **eṭuppumē**

(*kali.70:17-18*)

[**eṭu** ‘to arouse, stir up’; **eṭuppum** < **eṭupp** + **um**]

‘The (sound of the) bells worn by the good tall horses tied to your chariot **will reach here and arouse us / wake us up.**’

(3rd person neuter plural)

(non-past stem + **um**)

tūtum ceṇṇaṇa tōḷum **ceṇṇum**

(*aka.251:1*)

[**ceṇṇu** ‘to swell up due to excitement’; **ceṇṇum** < **ceṇṇu** + **um**]

‘The message has gone (to your lover); your shoulders also **will swell up** (with excitement about his return).’

<sup>7</sup> Some might derive it from **āku** + **um**.

nīr nīṭu āṭiṇ kaṇṇum civakkum āntōr vāyil tēṇum pulikkum  
(*kuru.354:1-2*)

[civa ‘to turn red’; civakkum < civakk + um]

‘One’s eyes **will turn red** if one plays/bathes for long in the water.  
Even honey will turn sour in the mouths of those who have had it to  
the full.’

**en:** (1st person singular)

(bare stem/non-past stem + **en**)

innum uḷenē tōḷi (*kuru.310:5*)

[uḷ ‘to exist’; uḷen < uḷ + en]

‘Alas, **I still exist**, my friend!’

amar variṇ aṇcēṇ peyarkkuven numar variṇ maraikuvēn  
(*narr.362:9-10*)

[peyar ‘to move’; marai ‘to hide’;

peyarkkuven < peyarkkuv + en;

maraikuvēn < maraikuv + en]<sup>8</sup>

‘If a war breaks up, **I will dodge** without fear. If your kin come **I**  
**will hide myself**.’

nin āy nalam marappenō (*aka.39:4-5*)

[mara ‘to forget’; marappen < marapp + en]

‘Will **I forget** your fine loveliness?’

nin kaṇṇāl kāṇpenman yāṇ (*kali.39:43*)

[kāṇ ‘to see’; kāṇpen < kāṇp + en]

<sup>8</sup> This is a good example to illustrate that the **kk** in the non-past stem **peyarkk** signifies causativity: **peyarkuven** ‘I will move’; **peyarkkuven** ‘I will make \_\_ move.’



**‘I will definitely see (my groom’s beauty at the wedding) through your eyes.’**

parukittai **taṇṭuven** (kali.85:35, 36)  
 [taṇṭu ‘to punish’; taṇṭuven < taṇṭuv + en]  
**‘Drink (the milk), or I will punish you.’**

**ēm:** (1st person plural/honorific)

(non-past stem + **ēm**)

kaṇṇoṭu **celvēṁ** (kali.116:1)  
 [cel ‘to leave’; celvēṁ < celv + ēṁ]  
**‘We are going with the calves.’**

yāraiyo niṇ **pulakkēṁ** (aka.46:7)  
 [pula ‘to sulk, chide’; pulakkēṁ < pulakk + ēṁ]  
**‘Who are you (to us after all)? We are sulking with you.’**

iṇiyavai peṇṇē taṇi t taṇi **nukarkēṁ** taruka eṇa viḷaiyā (pati.38:13-14)  
 [nukar ‘to enjoy’; nukarkēṁ < nukark + ēṁ]  
**‘Before one could wish “If we get good things we will enjoy them individually/privately; therefore give.” ...’**

aṇṇaikku aṇivippēṁ kol aṇiviyēṁ kol (aka.52:9-10)  
 [aṇivi ‘to make known, inform’; aṇivippēṁ < aṇivipp + ēṁ]  
**‘Shall we inform mother or not?’**

poruvēṁ eṇa p peyarkoṭuttu (paṭṭ:289)  
 [poru ‘to fight back’; poruvēṁ < poruv + ēṁ]  
**‘evading (the enemies) thinking, “We shall fight back” ’**

niṇ kuṛi vantu em katavam cēmtu acaitta kai vaḷaiyiṇ vāy viṭal mālai  
makalirai **nōvēṁō** (kali.68:8-9)

[**nō** 'to accuse, blame'; **nōvēṁ** < **nōv** + **ēṁ**]

'Shall **we** blame your (other) women who come for a rendezvous with you and have the nature of coming to our door (hoping to see you here) and announcing their arrival through the bangles on their hands which they put on our door?'

(non-past stem + glide + **ēṁ**)

makalirai ... amarpurra maintar akalam kaṭikuvēṁ eṇṇavai  
yārkkāṇum muṭi poruḷ aṇṇu (pari.20:91-93)

[**kaṭi** 'to avoid'; **kaṭikuvēṁ** < **kaṭiku** + glide **v** + **ēṁ**]

'It is not possible for anyone to say that **we shall avoid** the wide chest of the young men who desired (other women).'

**ēṇ**: (1st person singular)

(non-past stem + **ēṇ**)

iṇṇum ... **uḷḷēṇ** (pura.365:7, 9)

[**uḷ** 'to exist'; **uḷḷēṇ** < **uḷ** + **ēṇ**]

'I still exist.'

āṭu eṇil āṭalum āṛrukēṇ (kali.140:14)

[**āṛru** 'to perform'; **āṛrukēṇ** < **āṛruk** + **ēṇ**]

'If you tell me to sing, I **can perform** singing also.'

niṇ viḷumam **uvappēṇ** (narr.360:10)

[**uva** 'to rejoice / be delighted'; **uvappēṇ** < **uvapp** + **ēṇ**]

'I **rejoice** (about) your greatness.'

ivaḷai c col āṭi k **kāṇpēn** takaittu (kali.56:13)

[**kāṇ** 'to see'; **kāṇpēn** < **kāṇp** + **ēn**]

'I shall stop her and try to converse with her.'

ciru puṇ mālai uṇmai **aṛivēn** tōḷi avar k kāṇā ūṅkē (kuru.352:5-6)

[**aṛi** 'to know, understand'; **aṛivēn** < **aṛiv** + **ēn**]

'When I do not see him, I realize the existence of the small mean evening.'

yāṇē **maruḷvēn** (kuru.94:3)

[**maruḷ** 'to be confused'; **maruḷvēn** < **maruḷv** + **ēn**]

'I am confused.'

(non-past stem + glide + **ēn**)

ulli varukuvar kollō uḷaintu yāṇ eḷḷi **irukkuvēn** maṇ kolō

(kali.142:31-32)

[**iru** 'to remain, stay'; **irukkuvēn** < **irukku** + glide **v** + **ēn**]

'Will he think of me and come (to me), I wonder. (If he comes) will I sulk and remain despising him, I wonder.'

tōyntārai **aṛikuvēn** yāṇ (kali.79:9)

[**aṛi** 'to know, understand'; **aṛikuvēn** < **aṛiku** + glide **v** + **ēn**]

'I will know / find out about those who immersed themselves on your chest.'

**ai:** (2nd person singular)

(non-past stem + **ai**)

oḷ oḷi **āvai** oru kuḷai **āvai**

(pari.15:55)

[**ā** 'to be'; **āvai** < **āv** + **ai**]

'You are the bright light. You are the one with one kuḷai (earring).'

**niṇ perum celvam yārkkū eñcuvaīyē** (*pura.213:16*)  
 [eñcu ‘to leave behind’; eñcuvaī < eñcuv + ai]  
 ‘To whom will you leave behind your great wealth?’

**paḷi tapu nāyirē pātu ariyātār kaṇ kaḷiya k kataḷvai** (*kali.143:22-23*)  
 [kataḷ ‘to rush’; kataḷvai < kataḷv + ai]  
 ‘O flawless sun, in order to be excess(ively hot), you are rushing toward those who do not know the way of the world.’

(non-past stem + glide + ai)

**ceru p pala ceykuvai** (*pati.36:14*)  
 [cey ‘to do’; ceykuvai < ceyku + glide v + ai]  
 ‘You make many wars.’

**pakal nī variṇum puṇarkuvai ... meṇ tōlē** (*aka.18:16, 18*)  
 [puṇar ‘to unite’; puṇarkuvai < puṇarku + glide v + ai]  
 ‘Even if you come during the day you will unite with / join (her) soft shoulders.’

**ōm:** (1st person honorific/plural)

(non-past stem + glide + ōm)

**pulampoṭu terumaral uyakkamum tīrkkuvōm** (*pura.381:15-16*)  
 [tīr ‘to vanish, to rectify/cure’;  
 tīrkkuvōm < tīrkkū + glide v + ōm]  
 ‘We will get rid of (our) loneliness and weariness due to wandering.’

**m:** (3rd person neuter singular)

(non-past stem + m)

**puṇai kaḷal maintaroṭu tār aṇi maintar tava p payaṇ canm**

(pari.22:27-28)

[cāl 'to be abundant'; cānm < cāl + m]<sup>9</sup>

'The fruit of penance (performed) by young men wearing warrior's anklets and young men wearing garlands is abundant.'

---

<sup>9</sup> Some might treat cānm as derived from cāl + um > \*cālm > cānm.

## NEGATIVE PERSONAL VERBS

**GENERAL:** See "Past Personal Verbs."

**FORMATION:** The negative personal verbs are formed by suffixation:

- (i) a PNG suffix beginning with a long vowel is added directly to the bare verb stem. In negative personal verbs, PNG suffixes beginning with a short vowel are never added directly to the bare verb stem unless the latter is **al** 'not to be ...' or **il** 'to be non-existent.'
- (ii) **al** is added to a bare verb stem or a non-past stem ending with **(k)k** and is subsequently followed by a PNG suffix.
- (iii) **il** is added to the past stem of a verb and is subsequently followed by a PNG suffix.

The negative verbs do not normally refer to any particular time. However, it is possible to suppose that **al** "co-indicates" the incompletive aspect of negation whereas **il** "co-indicates" the completive aspect of

negation because **al** is appended to a non-past stem while **il** is appended to a past stem.

See “The Negative **al** and **il**” for information on periphrastic negative constructions formed by using conjugated forms of the intrinsically negative verbs **al** and **il**.

### PNG for negative finite verbs

1st person singular: **an**, **en**, **ēn**, **ēl**

1st person plural/honorific: **am**, **ām**, **ēm**

2nd person singular: **āy**, **ai**, **ōy**

2nd person plural/honorific: **ir**, **īr**

3rd person masculine singular: **an**, **ān**

3rd person feminine singular: **a|**, **ā|**

3rd person human plural/honorific: **ar**, **ār**

3rd person neuter singular: **atu**, **ātu**

3rd person neuter plural: **a**, **ā**, **m**

See “Person-Number-Gender” for information on the PNG categories.

## EXAMPLES

### Formation mechanism: suffixation

bare verb stem + PNG beginning with a long vowel

bare verb stem + **al** + PNG

non-past stem in **(k)k** + **al** + PNG

past stem + **il** + PNG

*PNG Structure and Example***a:** (3rd person neuter plural)(bare stem + **al** + **a**)kalīru inru **peyarala** paricilar kaṭumpē (pura.205:14)[**peyar** 'to move, leave'; **peyarala** < **peyar** + **al** + **a**]

'The group of suppliants will not move without (getting) the elephants.'

**atu:** (3rd person neuter singular)(bare stem + **al** + **atu**)iravu irantu ellai tōnralatu (narr.378:6)[tōnru 'to appear'; tōnralatu < tōnru + **al** + **atu**]

'The sun does not appear surpassing/overwhelming the night.'

**am:** (1st person plural/honorific)(bare stem + **al** + **am**)peṭpu inṛital yām **vēṇṭalamē** (pura.205:2)[**vēṇṭu** 'to wish for'; **vēṇṭalam** < **vēṇṭu** + **al** + **am**]

'We do not want the gift (provided) without caring.'

(bare stem + glide + **al** + **am**)ciṛukārōṭaṇ payiṇoṭu cērttiya kal pōl **piriyalam** (aka.1:5-6)[**piri** 'to separate'; **piriyalam** < **piri** + glide **y** + **al** + **am**]

'Like the stones, which the man who sharpens objects stuck together with glue, we will not be separated.'



(non-past stem + **al** + **am**)

**toṭukalam kuṛuka vāral ... mārpe** (*aka.196:8, 13*)

[**toṭu** ‘to touch’; **toṭukalam** < **toṭuk** + **al** + **am**]

‘We will not touch your chest. Do not come close.’

**ar**: (3rd person human plural/honorific)

(bare stem + **al** + **ar**)

**niṇ munṇōr ellām pārppār nōvaṇa ceyyalar** (*puṛa.43:13-14*)

[**cey** ‘to do’; **ceyyalar** < **cey** + **al** + **ar**]

‘None of your ancestors **would do** things that would hurt the brahmins.’

‘None of your ancestors did things that the brahmins would suffer from.’

(An example to show that the negative verb does not indicate any particular time.)

(bare stem + glide + **al** + **ar**)

**eṇrum eṇ tōḷ piripu aṛiyalarē** (*narr.1:2*)

[**aṛi** ‘to know’; **aṛiyalar** < **aṛi** + glide **y** + **al** + **ar**]

‘He **never knows** separation from my shoulders.’

**aḷ**: (3rd person feminine singular)

(bare stem + glide + **al** + **aḷ**)

**pīlaiyalaḷ mātō piritum nām eṇiṇē** (*aka.5:28*)

[**pīlai** ‘to survive’; **pīlaiyalaḷ** < **pīlai** + glide **y** + **al** + **aḷ**]

‘Alas, **she will not survive** if we depart.’

(past stem + **il** + **aḷ**)

**acai naṭai p pētai melintilaḷ** (*kuṛu.182:6-7*)

[**meli** ‘to grow thin, be weary’; **melintilaḷ** < **melint** + **il** + **aḷ**]

‘The innocent young woman, who is staggering, **is not weary**.’

**an:**

(1st person singular)

(non-past stem + **al** + **an**)

ivaḷ ... oli kūntal viṭṭu **amaikalanē** (narr.141:11-12)

[**amai** 'to stay calm, undisturbed'; **amaikalan** < **amaik** + **al** + **an**]

'I will not be calm if I leave her luscious tresses.'

(3rd person masculine singular)

(bare stem + glide + **al** + **an**)

valiyar eṇa vaḷi **moḷiyalan** (pura.239:6)

[**moḷi** 'to say'; **moḷiyalan** < **moḷi** + glide **y** + **al** + **an**]

'He will not say words after them (i.e., repeat what they said) just because they are powerful.'

**ā:** (3rd person neuter plural)

(bare stem + **ā**)

mā āṭiya pulan nāñcil **āṭā** (pati.25:1)

[**āṭu** 'to move'; **āṭā** < **āṭu** + **ā**]

'The plows will not move in the land where animals have moved.'

'The plows will not move in the land which the animals have destroyed.'

**ātu:** (3rd person neuter singular)

(bare stem + **ātu**)

peyal **ānātē** vāṇam (kuru.380:3)

[**ān** 'to be content with'; **ānātu** < **ān** + **ātu**;

**ānātē** < **ānātu** + **ē** particle]

‘The sky **will not be content with** pouring.’

‘The sky will not stop pouring.’

(bare stem + glide + **ātu**)

vittu varattin **cāvātu**

(*pura.137:5*)

[**cā** ‘to wither’; **cāvātu** < **cā** + glide **v** + **ātu**]

‘The seeds **will not die** of dryness.’

(non-past stem + **al** + **ātu**)

turaṇtu amaikallār kātalar maṇantu **amaikallātu** eṇ maṭam keḷu  
neñcē (*aink.457:3-4*)

[**amai** ‘to stay calm, undisturbed’;

**amaikallātu** < **amaik** + **al** + **ātu**]

‘My lover will not renounce me and be calm. My much ignorant heart **will not** forget him and **be** calm.’

**ām**: (1st person plural/honorific)

(bare stem + **ām**)

amai t tōḷāy niṇ mey vāl uppiṇ vilai **eyyām**

(*aka.390:10-11*)

[**ey** ‘to know’; **eyyām** < **ey** + **ām**]

‘O you with bamboo (like) shoulders, **we do not know** the price of the salt on your body.’

**āy**<sup>1</sup>: (2nd person singular)

(bare stem + **āy**)

eṇ karantu uṇaivōr uḷ valī **kāṭṭāy**

(*narr.196:6*)

[**kāṭṭu** ‘to show’; **kāṭṭāy** < **kāṭṭu** + **āy**]

<sup>1</sup> Personal verb forms ending with this suffix bear a resemblance to the imperative/optative forms ending with the suffix **āy**. See “The Imperative/Optative.”

**‘You are not showing me the direction/way in which he who is hiding away from me lives.’**

(bare stem + glide + āy )

**aṇṇu nam ariyāy** (aka.33:18)

[aṇṇi ‘to know’; ariyāy < aṇṇi + glide y + āy]

**‘You did not know us then.’**

(An example to show that the negative verb does not indicate any particular time.)

(non-past stem + al + āy)

**em kēḷvaṇ tarutalum tarukallāy tuṇai allai** (kali.148:17)

[tar ‘to give’; tarukallāy < taruk + al + āy]

**‘You don’t even bring back my husband. You are no companion.’**

**ār:** (3rd person human plural/honorific)

(bare stem + ār)

**ciṇṇu puṇ mālaiyum uḷḷār avar** (aka.114:6)

[uḷḷu ‘to think, remember, contemplate; uḷḷār < uḷḷu + ār]

**‘He does not think (of me) even in the lowly mean evening.’**

(bare stem + ār)

**maram cām maruntum koḷḷār māntar uram cā c ceyyār uyar tavam**

(naṇṇ.226:1-2)

[koḷ ‘to take’; cey ‘to do’; koḷḷār < koḷ + ār; ceyyār < cey + ār]

**‘People will not get/obtain/draw medicine which kills the tree; they will not do high penance wearing out their strength.’**

**aṇṇai t tiṅkaḷ av veṇ nilaviṇ entaiyum uṭaiyēm em kuṇṇum piṇar**

**koḷār**

(pura.112:1-2)

[koḷ ‘to take hold’; koḷār < koḷ + ār]

**'We had our father (living then) on that full moon (night). Neither did others take hold of our hill in that white moonlight.'**

(An example to show that the negative verb does not indicate any particular time.)

(bare stem + glide + ār)

tī nīrai k kaḷḷiṇum maḷi ceyum eṇa uraittum amaiyār (*kali.4:13-14*)

[amai 'to be satisfied, relax'; amaiyār < amai + glide y + ār]

**'He will not be satisfied** even after saying that the sweet water (of my lips) is more intoxicating than toddy.'

(bare stem + glide + ār)

peṇṭir iṇṇum ōvār eṇ tirattu alarē (*narr.116:11-12*)

[ō 'to end, cease'; ōvār < ō + glide v + ār]<sup>2</sup>

**'The townswomen have not yet ended** the gossip about me.'

(non-past stem + al + ār)

tiṅkaḷ aravu uṇi tīrkkalār āyiṇum tam katal kātṭuvar cāṇṇavar

(*kali.140:17-18*)

[tīr 'to vanish; to rectify, cure'; tīrkkalār < tīrkk + al + ār]

**'When the moon is gotten by the snake (during an eclipse), the noble people would show their love for it although they are/will not (be able to) rectify (its agony).'**

(non-past stem + al + ār)

tuṇantu amaikallār katalar maṇantu amaikallātu eṇ maṭam keḷu neñcē (*aink.457:3-4*)

[amai 'to stay calm/undisturbed'; amakallār < amaik + al + ār]

**'My lover will not renounce me and be calm. My much ignorant heart will not forget him and be calm.'**

<sup>2</sup> Some might take the stem to be ōvu.

**āḷ:** (3rd person feminine singular)

(bare stem + glide + āḷ)

pāṇaṇ cūṭāṇ pāṭiṇi aṇiyāḷ (pura.242:3)

[aṇi 'to decorate with, wear'; aṇiyāḷ < aṇi + glide y + āḷ]

'The bard will not wear (the jasmine); the bardess **will not** decorate herself **with** (it).'

(non-past stem + al + āḷ )

nāṇum niṛaiyum uṇarkallāḷ (kali.146:6)

[uṇar 'to realize, understand'; uṇarkallāḷ < uṇark + al + āḷ]

'She **does not** understand (the significance of) her bashfulness and virtue.'

**ā(a)n:** (3rd person masculine singular)

(bare stem + ān)

pāṇaṇ cūṭāṇ pāṭiṇi aṇiyāḷ (pura.242:3)

[cūṭu 'to wear'; cūṭāṇ < cūṭu + ān]

'The bard will not wear (the jasmine); the bardess **will not** decorate herself **with** (it).'

ītal ānān vēntē (pura.139:11)

[ān 'to be content with'; ānān < ān + ān]

'The king **is not** satisfied/content with his giving.'

(Note that ānān is a negative form. See "A Note on the Verb ān.")

iraviṇil patam perāan (kali.46:10)

[peru 'to obtain, get'; perāan < peru + ān]

'He **will not** get the opportunity (to have me) at night.'

(non-past stem+ ān)

ulaiyiṇ pōkān

(*kuṛu.294:7*)

[pō ‘to go, leave’; pōkān < pōk + ān]

‘He will not go (away) from me.’

(non-past stem + al + ān)

tān urra nōy uraikkallān peyarum maṇ

(*kali.37:4-5*)

[urai ‘to express, utter’; uraikkallān < uraikk + al + ān]<sup>3</sup>

‘What a pity, he moves away; (he) would not speak about his (love)sickness!’

**ir:** (2nd person plural/honorific)

(bare stem + al + ir)

kaṇṭaṇir āyiṇ kaḷaḷalir maṇṇō

(*aka.130:2*)

[kaḷaḷu ‘to chide’; kaḷaḷalir < kaḷaḷu + al + ir]

‘If you had seen (it) you would definitely not chide (me).’

**īr:**

(2nd person plural/honorific)

(bare stem + īr)

ivaḷ iṭai mulai k kiṭantum naṭuṅkal ānīr

(*kuṛu.178:3-4*)

[ān ‘to be content with’; ānīr < ān + īr]

‘Although you are lying in the middle of her breasts you do not stop trembling/shivering.’

(Note that ānīr is negative. See “A Note on the Verb ān.”)

<sup>3</sup> It could be interpreted as a participial noun in this context.

**en:** (1st person singular)

(bare stem + **al** + **en**)

oru nāl puṇara p puṇariṇ arai nāl vāḷkkaiyum **vēṇṭalen** yāṇē  
(*kurū.280:4-5*)

[**vēṇṭu** ‘to wish for’; **vēṇṭalen** < **vēṇṭu** + **al** + **en**]

‘If I unite with her for a day’s union, I **will not wish** for even a half-a-day’s living (further).’

**ēl:** (1st person singular)

(bare stem + **ēl**)

taṇiyē varutal naṇi pulampu uṭaittu eṇa **vārēl** maṇ yāṇ (*narr.267:7-8*)  
[**var** ‘to come’; **vārēl** < **var** + **ēl**]<sup>4</sup>

‘I **do not come** (to the shore any more) because coming alone feels quite lonely.’

**ē(e)m:** (1st person plural/honorific)

(bare stem + **ēm**)

piṇarum oruttiyai nam maṇai t tantu vatuvai ayaṇṭaṇai eṇpa aṭtu  
yām **kūrēm** (*aka.46:8-10*)

[**kūru** ‘to state, discuss’; **kūrēm** < **kūru** + **ēm**]

‘They say that you brought another woman to our house and celebrated the wedding. **We do not / will not speak** of it.’

uṇarcci illōr uṭaimai **uḷlēṁ** (*pura.197:16*)

[**uḷ(ḷu)** ‘to think’; **uḷlēṁ** < **uḷḷu** + **ēm**]

<sup>4</sup> This form, the only attestation with **ēl** as PNG, is suspicious. It could be an instance of metanalysis. Perhaps those who edited the anthologies analyzed **vārēṇman** as **vārēl** + **maṇ** instead of **vārēṇ** + **maṇ**.



**‘We will not think about the possession/wealth of those who do not have feelings/sentiments.’**

ivaṇai p poyppa viṭēem (kali.89:13-14)  
 [viṭu ‘to let go, permit’; viṭēem < viṭu + ēm]  
**‘We will not let him lie.’**

**ēn:** (1st person singular)

(bare stem + **ēn**)

paṭṭiṇam periṇum vārēn (paṭṭ:218, 220)  
 [var ‘to come along’; vārēn < var + ēn]  
**‘Even if I get the coastal town, I will not come (with you).’**

cellēn cellēn piṇar mukam nōkkēn (pura.399:14)  
 [cel ‘to leave for a destination’; nōkku ‘to look at’;  
 cellēn < cel + ēn; nōkkēn < nōkku + ēn]  
**‘I will not go. I will not go. I will not look at the faces of others.’**

eṇ vāy niṇ molī māṭṭēn (narr.342:3)  
 [māṭṭu ‘to fasten, stick’; māṭṭēn < māṭṭu + ēn]<sup>5</sup>  
**‘I will not stick your word(s) into my mouth.’**  
**‘I will not repeat your words.’**

eṇ tol kaviṇ tolaiyiṇum tolaika cāra viṭēen (narr.350:4, 6)  
 [viṭu ‘to let go, allow’; viṭēen < viṭu + ēn]  
**‘Even if my nurtured/innate loveliness is lost, I will not let (you) come close.’**

---

<sup>5</sup> Note that māṭṭ\_\_ follows the infinitive form of a verb to signify negation in modern Tamil: e.g., colla māṭṭēn ‘I will not say.’

(bare stem + glide + ēn)

avar cūlvatai evaṇ kol ariyēn (kali.4:11, 12)

[ari 'to know'; ariyēn &lt; ari + glide y + ēn]

'What is he planning? I do not know.'

(bare stem ± glide + al + ēn)

avaṇ maṛavalēnē pirar uḷḷalēnē (pura.395:32)

[maṛa 'to forget'; uḷḷu 'to remember, think';

maṛavalēn &lt; maṛa + glide v + al + ēn;

uḷḷalēn &lt; uḷḷu + al + ēn]

'I will not forget him; I will not think of others.'

(non-past stem + al + ēn)

uyartiṇai ūmaṇ pōla t tuyar porukkallēn tōli (kuru.224:5-6)

[poru 'to tolerate, bear with'; porukkallēn &lt; porukk + al + ēn]

'My friend, I cannot bear with the distress like a mute person.'

(non-past stem + al + ēn)

aḥtu arikalēn yānē (narr.206:11)

[ari 'to know'; arikalēn &lt; arik + al + ēn]

'I cannot (possibly) know that.'

(non-past stem + al + ēn)

mārpil ... yān cārātu amaikallēn (kali.104:65-66)

[amai 'to stay undisturbed'; amaikallēn &lt; amaik + al + ēn]

'I cannot stay calm without leaning on (his) chest.'

(past stem + il + ēn)

nalanum ilantāl ival eṇnum takkavir pōlum ilantilēn manṇō (kali.146:18-19)

[ila 'to lose'; ilantilēn &lt; ilant + il + ēn]

‘You seem to be the people who are saying “She lost her well-being too.” Certainly, **I have not lost** (it).’

**ai:** (2nd person singular)

(bare stem + **al** + **ai**)

peyal kaṇ maṛaittaṭiṇ vicumpu **kāṇalaiyē** (*kuṛu.355:1*)

[**kāṇ** ‘to see’; **kāṇalai** < **kāṇ** + **al** + **ai**]

‘Since the rain covers the area, **you do not see** the sky.’

‘Since the rain covers your eyes, **you do not see** the sky.’

(non-past stem + **al** + **ai**)

pakaivarkku aṇci p paṇintu **oḷukalaiyē** (*matu:201*)

[**oḷu** ‘to conduct oneself, behave’; **oḷukalai** < **oḷuk** + **al** + **ai**]<sup>6</sup>

‘**You will not** be afraid of your enemies and **behave** obediently.’

(past stem + **il** + **ai**)

evaṅkol eṇṛu niṇaikkalum **niṇaittilai** (*naṛr.297:5*)

[**niṇai** ‘to think’; **niṇaittilai** < **niṇaitt** + **il** + **ai**]

‘**You do not** even **think** “What is it?”’

**ōy:** (2nd person singular)

(bare stem + glide + **āt** + **ōy**)

ariyaḷ ākutaḷ **aṛiyātōyē** (*kuṛu.120:4*)

[**aṛi** ‘to know, understand’; **aṛiyātōy** < **aṛi** + **y** + **āt** + **ōy**]<sup>7</sup>

‘**You do not understand** that she is hard (to be obtained).’

<sup>6</sup> Some might consider **oḷuku** to be the stem.

<sup>7</sup> It could be interpreted as a participial noun in this context.

**m**<sup>8</sup>: (3rd person neuter plural)

(bare stem + **m**)

icaiyum in̄pamum ītalum mūn̄rum acaiyuṭaṇ iruntōrkku arum puṇarvu  
**in̄m** (narr.214:1-2)

[il 'to be non-existent; to be absent'; **in̄m** < il + **m**]

'The rare combination of the three, namely, fame, pleasure, and beneficence, **does not exist** for those who stay around (at home) with laziness.'

---

<sup>8</sup> It occurs only after il 'to be non-existent.'

## PAST PARTICIPIAL NOUNS

GENERAL: The finite verb form that refers either to the doer or the object of the action indicated by the verb is here called the “participial noun.” More specifically, when a finite verb form is used like a noun, it is referred to as a “participial noun.”<sup>1</sup> A participial noun can be interpreted as “X who/which is/was/were verb(s/ed/en),” where “X” is denoted by the PNG suffix in the participial noun and “verb” is the verb underlying the participial noun. The participial noun functions like any other nominal in that it can be declined. There is no formal difference between a finite verb and a participial noun except in some cases where the affixes attached to the stem are different for participial nouns. Technically, any finite verb can function as a participial noun and therefore in classical Tamil, many such verb forms provide two interpretations, one as a finite

---

<sup>1</sup> Traditional grammarians and commentators refer to the participial noun as **vinaiyāl aṇaiyum peyar** ‘noun embraced by an action’ (Nanṇūl, Rule 285), **vinaippeyar** ‘action noun’ (the Old Commentary on *pati.13:1*, 2, 4, 6), or **tolirpeyar** ‘action noun’ (the Old Commentary on *pati.19:19*).

verb and the other as a participial noun. Context alone determines the meaning in such cases.

Two basic types of participial nouns are found in classical Tamil: affirmative and negative. See “Negative Participial Nouns” for information about the negative type.

**FORMATION:** Past participial nouns are derived by suffixation. A participial noun suffix indicating the person-number-gender of the doer or the experiencer of the action is added to the past/completive stem of the verb. In some cases, an, in, or icin is added to the past/completive stem before adding the participial noun suffix.<sup>2</sup>

See “The Past Stem” and “Person-Number-Gender” for information on the past/completive stem and the PNG categories.

#### PNG for affirmative past participial nouns

1st person singular: en, ēn

1st person plural/honorific: am, ām, ēm

2nd person singular: āy, ōy

2nd person plural/honorific: avir, ir, ī(i)r

3rd person masculine singular: an, avan, ān, ōn

3rd person feminine singular: aval, aḷ, āl, ōḷ

3rd person human plural/honorific: avar, ar, ār, ōr

3rd person neuter singular: atu, atai

3rd person neuter plural: a, avai

---

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of an, in, and icin, see “Notes on Miscellaneous Items.”

## EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: suffixation

past/completive stem ± an/in/icin + PNG<sup>3</sup>

*PNG      Structure and Example*

**a:** (3rd person neuter plural)

(past/completive stem + glide + **a**)

irantōr vēṇṭiya koṭuttu (*kuru.349:5-6*)

[vēṇtu ‘to wish for’; vēṇṭiya < vēṇṭi + glide **y** + **a**;

vēṇṭiya is the object.]

‘giving **what** the suppliants **wished for**’

(past/completive stem + an + **a**)

māṇṭana pala (*pati.19:27*)

[māṇ ‘to be perfect, elegant’; māṇṭana < māṇṭ + an + **a**]

‘(the places) **which were** **elegant** **were** many’

(past/completive stem + glide + in + **a**)

kūntal orīiyina pōla ... mālaikkaṇ (*pati.21:33-34, 35*)

---

<sup>3</sup> Some might prefer to separate the initial **a** from the suffixes **avir**, **avan**, **avaḷ**, **avar**, **atai**, and **avai**, and consider it as part of the stem: e.g., **turaṇṭavar** ‘he who has renounced’ < **turaṇṭa** (past adjectival participle) + **ar** PNG or **turaṇṭa** (past adjectival participle) + **avar** ‘that person’ instead of **turaṇṭ** (past/completive stem) + **avar** PNG. But note that in non-past participial nouns, the adjectival participle form could not be identified as the stem. For example, in **iruppavar** ‘those who remain/stay’, **\*iruppa** is not non-past adjectival participle and therefore we cannot derive **iruppavar** from **\*iruppa** + **ar** or **\*iruppa** + **avar**. Therefore, I have settled for **irupp** (non-past/non-completive stem) + **avar** PNG which can be considered similar to **turaṇṭ** (past/completive stem) + **avar** PNG in structure.

[**oru** ‘to move away’; **orīiyina** < **orīi** + glide **y** + **in** + **a**]  
 ‘compassionate eyes **which** appear as if they **moved away** from the tresses’

**atu**: (3rd person neuter singular)

(past/completive stem + **atu**)

**kāl yāttatu** (*peru:133*)

[**yā** ‘to bind’; **yāttatu** < **yātt** + **atu**; **yāttatu** is the object]  
 ‘... **which** was bound to a post’

**kuppai vēlai uppili ventatai** (*cīru:137*)

[**ve** ‘to steam up, boil; **ventatai** < **ventatu** + **ai** (case marker)  
**ventatu** < **vent** + **atu**; **ventatai** is the object]  
 ‘the **vēlai** leaves **which** boiled without salt’  
 ‘the **vēlai** leaves which were cooked without salt’

(past/completive stem + glide + **atu**)

**nin ulḷiyatu muṭittōy** (*pura.211:9-10*)

[**ulḷu** ‘to think, intend’; **ulḷiyatu** < **ulḷi** + glide **y** + **atu**; **ulḷiyatu** is the object]  
 ‘you who accomplished **what** you intended’

**atai**: (3rd person neuter singular)

(past/completive stem + **atai**)

**ūrntatai ... pukaḷ cāl vēlam** (*pari.21:1, 2*)

[**ūr** ‘to ride’; **ūrntatai** < **ūrnt** + **atai**; **ūrntatai** is the object]  
 ‘**What** you rode was a famous elephant.’



**am:** (1st person honorific/plural)

(past/completive stem + **an** + **am**)

yām umakku c **ciraṇantaṇam** ātal aṇṇaṇir āyin (kali.5:4-5)  
 [**cira** 'to be dear/indispensable'; **ciraṇantaṇam** < **ciraṇant** + **an** + **am**]  
 'if you know that we are (people who are) dear to you'

**ar:** (3rd person human plural/honorific)

(past/completive stem + glide + **ar**)

pirital **valliyar** ... nattuṇantōr (aka.223:1)  
 [**val** 'to be capable'; **valliyar** < **valli** + glide **y** + **ar**]  
 'He who renounced us is one who is capable of being separated.'

(past/completive stem + **in** + **ar**)

vēṇṭupa vēṇṭupa **vēṇṭinaṇkku** aruḷi (peru:444)  
 [**vēṇṭu** 'to wish for'; **vēṇṭinaṇ** < **vēṇṭi** + **in** + **ar**]  
 'bestowing upon those who wanted whatever they wanted'

**avar:** (3rd person human plural/honorific)

(past/completive stem + **avar**)

naḷ eṇ kaṇkul naṇṇuṇku tuṇai āyavar niṇ maṇantu uṇaital yāvatu (aka.129:2-3)  
 [**ā** 'to be'; **āyavar** < **āy** + **avar**]  
 'How could he, who was (your) companion at those times of shivering/trembling in the thick of the night, stay (away) forgetting you?'

tuṇantavar āṇṭu āṇṭu uṇaikuvar kollō (kali.36:21)  
 [**tura** 'to renounce, relinquish'; **tuṇantavar** < **tuṇant** + **avar**]

‘Will he, **who has renounced** me, stay around here and there (away from me)?’

**naṭṭavar** kuṭi uyarkkuvai (matu:131)

[**naṭ** ‘to befriend’; **naṭṭavar** < **naṭṭ** + **avar**]

‘You will uplift the clans of **those who have befriended** you.’

**avaḷ**: (3rd person feminine singular)

(past/completive stem + **avaḷ**)

niṇ ṭimai **kāttavaḷ** (kali.44:19)

[**kā** ‘to protect, shield’; **kāttavaḷ** < **kātt** + **avaḷ**]

‘**she who prevented** the harm to you’

‘she who protected you from harm’

**avan**: (3rd person masculine singular)

(past/completive stem + **avan**)

varuvan enṇa kōṇatu perumaiyum atu paḷutu inṇi **vantavan** aṇivum  
(pura.217:7-8)

[**var** ‘to come’; **vantavan** < **vant** + **avan**]

‘the greatness of the king who said, “He will come” and the wisdom of **the one who came** without failing’

**avir**: (2nd person plural)

(past/completive stem + **avir**)

**cāṇravir** ... eṇ tuyar nilai tīrttal num talai k kaṭaṇē  
(kali.139:33, 36-37)

[**cāl** ‘to be noble’; **cāṇravir** < **cāṇr** + **avir**]

‘**Noble** people, it is your primary duty to remove the state of my distress.’

**kaṇṭavir ellām katum eṇa vantānkē paṇṭu aṇiyātīr pōla nōkkuvīr**

(*kali.140:1-2*)

[**kāṇ** ‘to see, notice’; **kaṇṭavir** < **kaṇṭ** + **avir**]

‘All those who noticed me have come here and are looking at me as if you do not know me from the past.’

**avai:**

(2nd person singular)

(past/completive stem + **avai**)

**māru amar aṭṭavai**

(*pari.21:66*)

[**aṭu** ‘to kill’; **aṭṭavai** < **aṭṭ** + **avai**]

‘You are the one who killed the enemies in the war.’

(3rd person neuter plural)

(past/completive stem + glide + **avai**)

**varai mutal citariyavai**

(*aka.108:3*)

[**citaru** ‘to scatter’; **citariyavai** < **citari** + glide y + **avai**]

‘those which scattered on the top of the mountain’

**an:** (3rd person masculine singular)

(past/completive stem + **in** + **an**)

**mutu pārppāṇ aṇcinan ātal aṇtu**

(*kali.65:20*)

[**aṇcu** ‘to fear’; **aṇcinan** < **aṇci** + **in** + **an**]

‘knowing that the old brahmin is a frightened man’

**ām:** (1st person plural/honorific)

(past/completive stem + **ām**)

**puṇarntām pōla uṇarnta neṇcamoṭu**

(*narr.349:4*)

[**puṇar** ‘to unite’; **puṇarntām** < **puṇarnt** + **ām**]  
 ‘with a heart that feels as if **we were** (people who were) **united**’

**āy**: (2nd person singular)

(past/completive stem + **āy**)

**muṇṇattān onru kurittāy pōl kātṭinai** (kali.61:7)

[**kuṛi** ‘to intend, aim for’; **kurittāy** < **kuritt** + **āy**]

‘You made a hint like **someone who had intended** something.’

(past/completive stem + glide + **āy**)

**nīnka k karutiyāykku ... tuyar uḷappavō** (kali.136:15, 16)

[**karutu** ‘to intend, propose’]

**karutiyāykku** < **karuti** + glide **y** + **āy** + **kku** (case marker)]

‘Would she have to suffer on behalf of / in response to **you who intended to leave?**’

**ār**: (3rd person human plural/honorific)

(past/completive stem + **ār**)

**nalkūrntār celva makal** (kali.50:14)

[**nalkūr** ‘to suffer’; **nalkūrntār** < **nalkūrnt** + **ār**]

‘the dear daughter of **those who have suffered**’

(**nalkūr** is probably from \***nali** ‘suffering’ + **kūr** ‘to intensify’)

(past/completive stem + **in** + **ār**)

**onrinār vālkkaiyē vālkkai** (kali.18:11)

[**onru** ‘to unite, co-operate’; **onrinār** < **onri** + **in** + **ār**]

‘Only the life of **those who are harmoniously united** is (true) life.’

**āl:** (3rd person feminine singular)

(past/completive stem + **āl**)

**īnrāṭku** oru peṇ ivaḷ (*pari.8:58*)

[**īn** 'to give birth'; **īnrāṭku** < **īnrāl** + **ku** (case marker);

**īnrāl** < **īnr** + **āl**]

'She is the only daughter of the **woman who gave birth** to her.'

**ān:** (3rd person masculine singular)

(past/completive stem + **ān**)

pakai il nōy **ceytān** ... malai (*kali.40:6*)

[**cey** 'to make, do'; **ceytān** < **ceyt** + **ān**]

'the mountain that belongs to **him who created** a non-hostile sickness'

'the mountain that belongs to him who gave me lovesickness'

(past/completive stem + glide + **ān**)

**kaṭṭiyārku** yāṅku ākuvam kol (*narr.313:5-6*)

[**kaṭi** 'to avoid, renounce'; **kaṭṭiyārku** < **kaṭṭiyān** + **ku** (case marker);

**kaṭṭiyān** < **kaṭi** + glide **y** + **ān**]

'Where will we be for him **who has renounced** us?'

'He has renounced us. Now, where do we stand?'

(past/completive stem + glide + **in** + **ān**)

evvam **urṭiyinān** kuṇru (*kali.42:24*)

[**uru** 'to experience'; **urṭiyinān** < **urṭi** + glide **y** + **in** + **ān**]

'the hill of the **man who caused** us grief'

**ir:** (2nd person honorific/plural)

(past/completive stem + **an** + **ir**)

curam collātu irappa t **tuṇintanirkku** oru poruḷ colluvatu uṭaiyēṇ  
(*kali.8:6-8*)

[**tuṇi** ‘to decide, dare’;

**tuṇintanirkku** < **tuṇintanir** + **kku** (case marker);

**tuṇintanir** < **tuṇint** + **an** + **ir**]

‘I have one thing to say to you **who** have decided to go through the forest without telling (us).’

**ī(i)r<sup>4</sup>:** (2nd person plural/honorific)

(past/completive stem + **īr**)

palcān**īr**ē palcān**īr**ē (*puṛa.195:1*)

[**cāl** ‘to be noble, be abundant’; **cān**īr**** < **cān** + **īr**]

‘O you **who** are full of many virtues.’

(past/completive stem + glide + **īr**)

yā**īr**ō em **vilāṅkiy**īr**** (*aka.390:14*)

[**vilāṅku** ‘to intercept, cross’; **vilāṅkiy**īr**** < **vilāṅki** + glide **y** + **īr**]

‘Who are you **who** intercepted us?’

(The vowel in the PNG is lengthened because the participial noun is in the vocative case.)

**en:** (1st person singular)

(past/completive stem + **ēn**)

nin āṭu koḷ viyaṇ mārpu **tolutanen** paḷicci c celval ... yā**ē**

<sup>4</sup> The **īr** is a variant of **ir**.

(pura.211:15-17)

[tolu 'to worship'; tolutanen < tolut + an + en]

'I shall leave, as **one who has worshipped** your wide triumphant chest.'

**ēm**: (1st person honorific/plural)

(past/completive stem + **ēm**)ali **perēm** emmai nī arulinai

(kali.66:22)

[**peru** 'to get, obtain'; **perēm** < **per** + **ēm**]

'You showed compassion to us **who obtained** your sympathy.'

**ēn**: (1st person singular)

(past/completive stem + **ēn**)tantai tan ūr ituvē **inrēn** yānē

(narr.198:11-12)

[**in** 'to give birth'; **inrēn** < **inr** + **ēn**]

'This is her father's town. **I am the one who gave birth** to her.'

(past/completive stem + **ēn**)arattotu **ninrēnai** k kaṭu

(kali.39:20)

[**nil** 'to stand, stay'; **ninrēn** < **ninr** + **ēn**;**ninrēnai** < **ninrēn** + **ai** (case marker)]

'looking at me **who stood** in the path of duty'

(By literary convention, **arattotu nil** means "to inform the mother about the love between her daughter and her lover." It is the duty or virtue [**aram**] of the female companion of the daughter to undertake this task.)

(past/completive stem + **an** + **ēn**)niṇṇai t **takaittanēn** allal kāṇ (kali.108:20)[**takai** 'to stop, check'; **takaittanēn** < **takaitt** + **an** + **ēn**]'Look at the grief of me **who stopped** you (from going away from me).''Look at my grief, **who stopped** you.'**ōy**: (2nd person singular)(past/completive stem + **ōy**)tīṅku ceytaṇaiyē īṅku **vantōyē** (aka.112:8)[**var** 'to come'; **vantōy** < **vant** + **ōy**]'You **who came** here, you have done harm.'(past/completive stem + glide + **ōy**)kuṛa p piṇā k koṭiyai k **kūṭiyōy** (pari.19:95)[**kūṭu** 'to unite'; **kūṭiyōy** < **kūṭi** + glide **y** + **ōy**]'O you, **who united** with a vine-like Kuṛava woman (Vallī).'**ōr**: (3rd person human plural/honorific)(past/completive stem + **ōr**)paṇmalai **īrantōrkku** (aka.101:17)[**īra** 'to cross over, pass'; **īrantōr** < **īrant** + **ōr**]'to him **who passed** many mountains'(past/completive stem + glide + **ōr**)nīrum nilaṇum **puṇariyōr** īṇṭu uṭampum uyirum paṭaittiṇōrē (pura.18:22-23)[**puṇar** 'to join'; **puṇariyōr** < **puṇari** + glide **y** + **ōr**]



**‘Those who have joined the water and the land are those who (in fact) have created bodies and lives here (on earth).’**

(past/completive stem + **icin** + **ōr**)

tāam tēralar kollō cēynāṭṭu ... **iranticiṇōrē** (*narr.302:6-10*)

[**ira** ‘to cross over’; **iranticiṇōr** < **irant** + **icin** + **ōr**]

**‘Is he not sure ... who has crossed over to a faraway country?’**

nīrum nilaṇum puṇariyōr iṇṭu uṭampum uyirum **paṭaitticiṇōrē**

(*pura.18:22-23*)

[**paṭai** ‘to create’; **paṭaitticiṇōr** < **paṭaitt** + **icin** + **ōr**]

**‘Those who have joined the water and the land are those who (in fact) have created bodies and lives here (on earth).’**

(past/completive stem + **in** + **ōr**)

ceṛu tī neṇcattu c **cinam niṭiṇōr**

(*pari.5:73*)

[**niṭu** ‘to last, extend’; **niṭiṇōr** < **niṭi** + **in** + **ōr**]

**‘people in whose heart of destructive fire fury has lasted’**

**ōl:** (3rd person feminine singular)

(past/completive stem + **ōl**)

kaṇṇu puku mālai **ninrōl** eyti

(*aka.9:20*)

[**nil** ‘to stand, wait’; **ninrōl** < **ninr** + **ōl**]

**‘reaching her who is standing (waiting for me) in the evening when the calves enter (the village)’**

(past/completive stem + **icin** + **ōl**)

varuntinaḷ aḷiyaḷ nī **pirinticiṇōlē**

(*kuṛu.336:6*)

[**piri** ‘to separate from’; **pirinticiṇōl** < **pirint** + **icin** + **ōl**]

**‘She, from whom you are separated, felt sad. She is to be pitied.’**

**ōṇ:** (3rd person masculine singular)

(past/completive stem + **ōṇ**)

kaṭavuḷ pēṇiyar **uyarntōṇ** ēntiya arum peral piṇṭam (*pati.30:34-35*)

[**uyar** 'to be noble, lofty in principles'; **uyarntōṇ** < **uyarnt** + **ōṇ**]

'the morsel, rare to be obtained, which **the noble one** carried (high in his hands) for worshipping god'

(past/completive stem + glide + **ōṇ**)

nerunai em muṇ **tappiyōṇ** tappiyoṭu ... nāḷai c ceykuvan amar

(*pura.304:4-5, 6*)

[**tappu** 'to wrong'; **tappiyōṇ** < **tappi** + glide **y** + **ōṇ**]

'I shall wage war with the younger brother of the **man who wronged** my older brother yesterday.'

## NON-PAST PARTICIPIAL NOUNS

**GENERAL:** See “Past Participial Nouns” for more general information on participial nouns. The non-past participial noun can be construed as either a “present” participial noun or as a “future” participial noun; the context helps in deciding which is appropriate.

**FORMATION:** Non-past/non-completive participial nouns are derived by suffixation. A participial noun suffix indicating the person-number-gender of the doer or the experiencer of the action is added directly to the non-past/non-completive stem or is preceded by *āl* ‘person’ or *an*.<sup>1</sup>

See “The Non-past Stem” and “Person-Number-Gender” for information on the non-past/non-completive stem and the PNG categories.

### PNG for non-past/non-completive participial nouns

1st person singular: **en**, **ēn**

1st person plural/honorific: **am**, **ām**, **ēm**

---

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the affix *an*, see “Notes on Miscellaneous Items.”

2nd person singular: āy, i, ai, ōy

2nd person plural/honorific: ĩr

3rd person masculine singular: avan, an, ān, ōn

3rd person feminine singular: aval, al, āl, i, ol

3rd person human plural/honorific: ar, avar, ār, ārkaḷ, ōr

3rd person neuter singular: atu, i

3rd person neuter plural: a, avai

## EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: suffixation

non-past/non-completive stem ± an/āl + PNG

### *PNG      Structure and Example*

**a:** (3rd person neuter plural)

(non-past/non-completive stem + a)

torutta vayal āral **piralnavum** ēru poruta ceṟu ulātu **vittunavum**

(*pati.13:1-2*)

[**piral** ‘to wallow’; **vittu** ‘to sow’; **piralna** < **piraln** + **a**;

**vittuna** < **vittun** + **a**; **vittuna** is the object]

‘manured fields **where the āral fish wallow**; and, the muddy land **where seeds are sown** without tilling the soil (that) the oxen stamped’

neytal iruṅkaṇ erumaiyiṇ nirai **taṭukkunavum**

(*pati.13:3-4*)

[**taṭu** ‘to put up an obstacle or barrier’; **taṭukkuna** < **taṭukkun** + **a**]

‘the dark eye-like neytaal flowers **which block** the water-buffaloes’

ō maṇantu aṇu kuḷam **niṇaikkuna** pōla alkalum aḷutal mēvala āki  
(aka.11:12-14)

[**niṇai** ‘to fill up’; **niṇaikkuna** < **niṇaikkun** + **a**]

‘like the sluices **which**, forgetting to be shields, **are filling up** the drying pond, (my eyes) have come to shed tears every day and ...’

am maṇal vaṭu t tūra **varippa pōl** īṅkai vāṭu utirpu uka (kali.31:2-3)  
[**vari** ‘to decorate by lining up’; **varippa** < **varipp** + **a**]

‘the wilting īṅkai flowers fall and scatter **as if they line up** filling the dips on the soft sand’

**vēṇṭupa vēṇṭupa vēṇṭinarkku** aruḷi (peru:444)

[**vēṇṭu** ‘to wish for’; **vēṇṭupa** < **vēṇṭup** + **a**; **vēṇṭupa** is the object]

‘providing/bestowing **whatever was wished for** upon those who wanted’

nāvāy **tōṇruva** kāṇāmō (aka.110:18-19)

[**tōṇru** ‘to appear’; **tōṇruva** < **tōṇruv** + **a**; **tōṇruva** is the object]

‘Don’t we see the boats **which appear** (on the horizon)?’

(non-past/non-completive stem + **an** + **a**)

uṭaṅku **koṭpana** pōl pukuttanar toḷūu (kali.105:22)

[**koḷ** ‘to spin’; **koṭpana** < **koṭp** + **an** + **a**]

‘They made the bulls enter the stall like things/animals **which spin all together.**’

ari paripu **aruppana** (kali.103:24)

[**aru** ‘to cut, sever, tear’; **aruppana** < **arupp** + **an** + **a**]

‘bulls **which pull and tear up** the intestines of their enemies’

vaṇappu uṛa k koḷvaṇa nāṭi aṇintaṇaḷ (kali.82:19)

[koḷ 'to take hold, accept'; koḷvaṇa < koḷv + aṇ + a;

koḷvaṇa is the object]

'She looked for (ornaments) which are proper for attaining beauty and wore them.'

**atu:** (3rd person neuter singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + atu)

nallatu ceṭtal āṇṇī āyiṇum allatu ceṭtal ōmpumiṇ atutāṇ ellārum

uvappatu (pura.195:6-8)

[uva 'to rejoice, enjoy, like'; uvappatu < uvapp + atu;

uvappatu is the object]

'Even if you are not able to do good, retreat from doing (things) which are not good. That indeed is what is liked by everyone.'

uṇṇatu nāḷi uṭuppavai iraṇṭē (pura.189:5)

[uṇ 'to consume, eat'; uṇṇatu < uṇṇ + atu; uṇṇatu is the object.]

'What one eats is (equal to the measure of) a nāḷi. What one wears is only two (pieces of clothing).'

cellunarkku uṛuvatu kūṛum ... palliya kāṭu (aka.151:12-13, 15)

[uṛu 'to occur, befall'; uṛuvatu < uṛuv + atu]

'The forest has geckos which tell those who pass by what will befall.'

(non-past/non-completive stem + glide + atu)

taṇ kaṇ kaṇṭatu poykkuvatu aṇṇē (kuru.26:5)

[poy 'to lie, fail'; poykkuvatu < poykku + glide v + atu]

‘It (the monkey) is not something **which will lie** about what its eyes saw.’

‘It (the monkey) will not lie about what it witnessed.’

cēmtaṇai celiṇē **citaikuvatu** uṇṭō (aka.120:13)

[**citai** ‘to smash/destroy’; **citaikuvatu** < **citaiku** + glide **v** + **atu**]

‘Is there anything **that will be destroyed** if you stay over and leave (later)?’

**am:** (1st person plural)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **am**)

cenmō peruma em viḷavu uṭai nāṭṭu eṇa yām **tan ariyunam** āka

(pura.381:5-6)

[**ari** ‘to know’; **ariyunam** < **ariyun** + **am**]

‘As we **informed** him “We shall now go to our festive country,” ...’

‘As we said to him “We shall now go to our festive country” and **waited to know his response**, ...’

**ar:** (3rd person human plural/honorific)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **ar**)

aruḷa vallai ākumati aruḷ ilar koṭāmai **vallar** ākuka ... **niṇ pakai**

etirtōrē

(pura.27:17-18, 19)

[**val** ‘to be capable, be skilled’; **vallar** < **val** + **ar**]

‘May you become one who is skilled in giving. May those who are facing your enmity become **those skilled** in not giving.’

**kaviṭṭa maṇṭai malarkkunar yār** (*pura.103:3*)  
 [malar ‘to unfold, turn up’; malarkkunar < malarkkun + ar]  
 ‘Who are the people who will turn up our (begging) bowls which are upside down (now).’

**ār aṇar uṇunar aru niṇam cuṭṭi k kūr eḥku eṇiṇar** (*aka.71:11-12*)  
 [eṇi ‘to fling, toss’; eṇiṇar < eṇiñ + ar]  
 ‘the people who throw sharp spears pointing to the dear chest of those who are already experiencing harsh grief’

**pāṭunarkku oṇṇu īkunarum illai** (*pura.235:17*)  
 [pāṭu ‘to sing’; ī ‘to bestow’; pāṭunar < pāṭun + ar;  
 īkunar < īkun + ar]  
 ‘There is no one who would give to those who sing.’

**kāṇunar vayāam kaṭku iṇ cēyāṇṇi** (*malai:476*)  
 [kāṇ ‘to see’; kāṇunar < kāṇun + ar]  
 ‘of the river, pleasing to the eyes, which comes from a distance and which those who look at it will desire’  
 ‘of the river, pleasing to the eyes, which comes from a distance and will be liked by those who desire it’

**ār aṇar uṇunar aru niṇam cuṭṭi k kūr eḥku eṇiṇar** (*aka.71:11-12*)  
 [uṇu ‘to experience’; uṇunar < uṇun + ar]  
 ‘the people who throw sharp spears pointing to the dear chest of those who are already experiencing harsh grief’

**aṇainar ṭim piḷi entiram** (*pati.19:22-23*)  
 [aṇai ‘to grind’; aṇainar < aṇain + ar]  
 ‘the mill where people, who grind, extract the sweet (juice of sugarcanes)’



naṛavu uṇ vaṇṭāy narampu **uḷarnar** (pari.9:63)

[**uḷar** ‘to pluck’; **uḷarnar** < **uḷarn** + **ar**]

‘those who pluck the strings (of the harp) like bees feeding on honey’

tirumaṇi **kuyinar** (matu:511)

[**kuyil** ‘to bore’; **kuyinar** < **kuyiln** + **ar**]

‘those who bore lustrous gems’

poṇ urai **kāṇmar** (matu:513)

[**kāṇ** ‘to see, witness, examine’; **kāṇmar** < **kāṇm** + **ar**]

‘those who examine the rubbing of gold (on a special stone, for estimating it)’

**nacaivar** (pura.229:25)

[**nacai** ‘to like, desire’; **nacaivar** < **nacaiv** + **ar**]

‘those who like ...’

(non-past/non-completive stem + **an** + **ar**)

**viraivaṇar** kātalar **pukutara** (kali.134:26)

[**virai** ‘to rush’; **viravaṇar** < **viraiv** + **an** + **ar**]

‘as her lover arrived (as someone who was) hurried’

‘as her lover arrived hurriedly’

(non-past/non-completive stem + glide + **āl** + **ar**)

em kuḷici malarkkum kaṭaṇ **aṛiyālar** pira nāṭṭu iṇmai<sub>i</sub>ṇ

(pura.393:4-5)

[**aṛi** ‘to know’; **aṛiyālar** < **aṛi** + glide **y** + **āl** + **ar**]

‘since those who know the duty of turning up our pots (for giving alms) do not exist in other countries’

‘since there is none in other countries who knows the duty of turning up our pots for giving alms’

**avar:** (3rd person human plural/honorific)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **avar**)

maṇai vayiṇ **iruppavar** (aka.389:10)

[iru ‘to remain’; **iruppavar** < **irupp** + **avar**]

‘those who remain in the house’

atari koḷpavar (matu.94)

[koḷ ‘to take hold, grasp, carry’; **koḷpavar** < **koḷp** + **avar**]

‘those who take (hold of) the hay’

**avaḷ:** (3rd person feminine singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **avaḷ**)

ūṭu meṇ ciṟu kiḷi **uṇarppavaḷ** (kali.72:4)

[uṇar ‘to understand, reconcile’; **uṇarppavaḷ** < **uṇarpp** + **avaḷ**]

‘she who is coaxing the sulking little parrot’

yāṇ ākiyar niṇ neṇcu **nērpavaḷē** (kuru.49:5)

[nēr ‘to fit, be right for, be proper’; **nērpavaḷ** < **nērp** + **avaḷ**]

‘May I be the one who is / will be suitable for your heart!’

**avan:** (3rd person masculine singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **avan**)

am malai eṭukkal cellātu **uḷappavan** (kali.38:4-5)

[uḷa ‘to struggle’; **uḷappavan** < **uḷapp** + **avan**]

‘one who is struggling without being able to lift that mountain’

**varaipavaṇ** eṇṇiṇ akalāṇ (kali.146:27)  
 [varai ‘to delimit, choose’; **varaipavaṇ** < **varaip** + **avaṇ**]  
 ‘the one who has chosen me (for marrying) will not go away from me’

**avai**: (3rd person neuter plural)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **avai**)

uṇpatu nāli **uṭuppavai** iraṇṭē (pura.189:5)  
 [uṭu ‘to wear, wrap around’; **uṭuppavai** < **uṭupp** + **avai**;  
**uṭuppavai** is the object]  
 ‘What one eats is (equal to the measure of) a nāli. What one wears is only two (pieces of clothing).’

**urukupavai** pōl eṇpu kuḷir koḷi (poru:78)  
 [uruku ‘to melt’; **urukupavai** < **urukup** + **avai**]  
 ‘like things which are melting/loosening, the bones were cold and ...’  
 (The reference is to the shivering due to the cold.)

**aḷ**: (3rd person feminine singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **aḷ**)

neṭuñcuḷi nīttam **maṇṇunaḷ** pōla (aka.62:10)  
 [maṇṇu ‘to clean by washing’; **maṇṇunaḷ** < **maṇṇun** + **aḷ**]  
 ‘she, like someone who is washing up in the water with wide ripples’

nīḷ nakar ... **niṇaiyunaḷ** vatintakkāl (kali.126:14)  
 [niṇai ‘to think’; **niṇaiyunaḷ** < **niṇaiyun** + **aḷ**]

‘when she stayed in her big house (as someone who is) **thinking** (about you)’

‘when she stayed in her big house **thinking** (about you)’

av icai muḷai ēṟru alaippa alaittuḷi c **celkuvaḷ** āṅku t tamar k kāṇāmai  
mīṭciyum kūu k kūu mēvum (pari.19:63-65)

[**cel** ‘to go’; **celkuvaḷ** ‘she who goes’ < **celkuv** + **aḷ**]

‘The hill is such that she resorts to calling out to her kin again and again without finding them **when she goes** (looking for them) since the caves echoed her call.’

(non-past/non-completive stem + **an** + **aḷ**)

inaiyana tīmai **ninaivanaḷ** kāttu (kali.44:18)

[**ninaḷ** ‘to think’; **ninaivanaḷ** < **ninaiv** + **an** + **aḷ**]

‘she prevented this kind of harm as **someone who would think** about it (before hand) and ...’

‘she prevented this kind of harm, having sensed/thought about it and ...’

**an**: (3rd person masculine singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **an**)

niṇ veyyan āyiṇ avan veyyai nī āyiṇ (kali.107:21)

[**vey** ‘to like’; **veyyan** < **vey** + **an**]

‘if **he is someone whom you like** and you are someone whom he likes’

kāṭu muṇṇinaṇē kaḷ **kāmuṇaṇ** (pura.238:5)

[**kāmuṇu** ‘to experience desire’ < **kām** + **uṇ**;

**kāmuṇaṇ** < **kāmuṇ** + **an**]

‘**he who desired toddy** intended / thought of the forest’

puravu etirkoḷvaṇai k kaṇṭaṇam varaṛku (pati.57:15)

[etirkoḷ ‘to receive, anticipate’ < etir + koḷ;

etirkoḷvaṇ < etirkoḷv + aṇ]

‘in order to return after seeing the one who anticipates to protect (the suppliants)’

(non-past/non-completive stem + aṇ + aṇ)

koḷuṅkuṛai ... viraivaṇaṇ cuṭṭu ... tiṇm eṇa t tarutaliṇ

(puṛa.150:9, 12, 13)

[virai ‘to rush, hurry’;

viraivaṇaṇ ‘one who rushed’ < viraiv + aṇ + aṇ]

‘since he baked a fat piece of animal flesh as someone in a hurry and gave it to us saying “Eat,” ... ’

‘since he baked a fat piece of animal flesh in a hurry and gave it to us saying “Eat,” ... ’

**ām:** (1st person honorific/plural)

(non-past/non-completive stem + ām)

aiyaṇai ēttuvām pōla

(kali.43:5)

[ēttu ‘to praise’; ēttuvām ‘those who praise’ < ēttuv + ām]

‘like those who praise the Lord/Chief’

**āy:** (2nd person singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + āy)

vaḷaṅkā p poḷutu nī kaṇṛu mēyppāy pōl vaḷaṅkal (kali.112:12-13)

[mēy ‘to graze’; mēyppāy < mēypp + āy]

‘moving around like someone who is grazing the calves at a time when no one moves around’

**ār:** (3rd person human plural/honorific)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **ār**)

yālin puri **nekiḷppār** (pari.18:36-37)

[**nekiḷ** 'to loosen'; **nekiḷppār** < **nekiḷpp** + **ār**]

'those who loosen the twist of the harp's strings'

emmai p purappēm **enpār**um palarāl (kali.94:24-25)

[**en** 'to say'; **enpār** < **enp** + **ār**]

'There are many who say that they will protect us.'

nuntai nalaṇ uṇa c cāy c **cāaynār** evva nōy (kali.80:16-17)

[**cāy** 'to suffer, wither, cave in';

**cāaymār** < **cāaym** + **ār** < **cāym** + **ār**]

'the painful (love)sickness of women who are withering since your father enjoyed their loveliness'

viḷiyā viruntu **viḷuvār**kku koytōy talir (pari.6:61-62)

[**viḷu** 'to desire'; **viḷuvār** < **viḷuv** + **ār**]

'You picked tender leaves for those who desired an endless feast.'

**aṛivār** yār avar munṇiyavvē (narr.269:9)

[**aṛi** 'to know, realize'; **aṛivār** < **aṛiv** + **ār**]

'Who are the people who know what he intended?'

(non-past/non-completive stem + **an** + **ār**)

kālai āvatu aṛiyār mālai **enmanār** mayāṅkiyōrē (kali.119:15-16)

[**en** 'to say'; **enmanār** < **enm** + **an** + **ār**]

'Those who say that it is evening, not knowing that it is morning, are confused.'

**ār(kal):** (3rd person human plural/honorific)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **ār[kal]**)

**vāl̥vārkaṭku**

(*kali.145:17*)

[**vāl̥** ‘to live’; **vāl̥vārkaṭku** < **vāl̥vārkaḷ** + **ku** case marker;

**vāl̥vārkaḷ** < **vāl̥v** + **ārkaḷ**]

‘for those who are living/thriving’

(Note the two plural suffixes, **ār** and **kaḷ**.)

**āl̥:** (3rd person feminine singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **āl̥**)

**paital nōy ulappālai ... nīṅkīṇrāl pacappē**

(*kali.130:18, 21*)

[**ula** ‘to struggle’; **ulappāḷ** < **ulapp** + **āl̥**]

‘Lovesick pallor left her who is struggling through lovesickness.’

**nī emmai eḷḷutal maraittal ōmpu enpālai ... avan ... unarppittal**

(*pari.18:9-10, 13*)

[**en** ‘to say’; **enpāl̥** < **enp** + **āl̥**]

‘cajoling the woman who says to him “Avoid hiding (the fact) that you despise us” ’

**araṅkiṇ mēl āṭuvāl̥ aṇi nutal**

(*kali.79:4*)

[**āṭu** ‘to dance’; **āṭuvāl̥** < **āṭuv** + **āl̥**]

‘beautiful forehead of the woman who is dancing on a stage’

**āṇ:** (3rd person masculine singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **āṇ**)

**putu nāṇ nulaippāṇ nuti māṇ vaḷ ukir**

(*kuru.67:3*)

[**nulai** ‘to enter’; **nulaippāṇ** < **nulaipp** + **āṇ**]

‘sharp nails with fine tips of **the man who threads** a new string  
(through a gold coin)’

ur̥rāriṇ nīṅkalam **enpān** malai (kali.40:28-29)

[**en** ‘to say’; **enpān** < **enp** + **ān**]

‘the mountain which belongs to **him who says** “We shall not go  
away from our kin” ’

annai ... cēri am peṇṭir ciṟu col nampi c **cuṭuvān** pōla nōkkum  
(narr.175:5, 7-8)

[**cuṭu** ‘to burn’; **cuṭuvān** < **cuṭuv** + **ān**]<sup>2</sup>

‘Believing the mean words of the neighborhood women, mother  
looks at me like **someone who would burn** (me) **up**.’

**i:**

(2nd person singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + i)

em uyir uṭampu **aṭuvi** (aka.136:19)

[**aṭu** ‘to kill, destroy’; **aṭuvi** < **aṭuv** + **i**]

‘**you who are killing** my life-breath and body’

<sup>2</sup> An interesting example. Probably the form **ān pōl** (or **ārpōl**), as found here in the example **cuṭuvān pōl**, is the source for the modern Tamil usage **ārpōl** ‘like, as if’ which has many variations **āl pōla**, **āppōla**, and **āppla** (in fast spoken Tamil). In modern Tamil, this **ārpōl** is added to a past or a non-past stem, for example, **avar vantārpōla t terikiratē** ‘It seems he came’; **ava aṅke pōrāppala ille** (spoken Tamil) ‘It doesn’t seem like she is going to go there.’



(3rd person feminine singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **i**)

kaṅkul uyavu t tuṇai ākiya tuṇcātu **uraivi** ivaḷ (*aka.298:22-23*)

[**urai** 'to stay'; **uraivi** < **uraiv** + **i**]

'She is someone who has become my concerned companion at night and **who stays** without sleeping.'

(3rd person neuter singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **i**)

cāntā**arri** pōla (*pari.21:30*)

[**ārru** 'to make dry, cool off'; **ārri** < **ārru** + **i**; cāntu 'sandal paste']

'like the thing/fan which dries off the sandal paste'

**īr:** (2nd person plural/honorific)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **īr**)

varuv**īr** uḷ**īrō** (*kuṛu.118:4*)

[**var** 'to come'; **varuvīr** < **varuv** + **īr**]

'Are there any **who would** (like to) **come** (inside the house)?'

**en:** (1st person singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **en**)

vā eṇa k kūruven pōla k kāṭṭi maṛru avan mēe vaḷi mēvāy neṇcē  
(*kali.47:22-24*)

[**kūru** 'to state'; **kūruven** < **kūruv** + **en**]

'My heart, guide (him) like me **who would** tell him to come (for a rendezvous) and then go wherever he goes.'

(non-past/non-completive stem + **an** + **en**)

yāṇ taṇ karaiya vantu **viraivanen** kavaii ... nāṇi niṇṇōḷ

(*aka.16:13-14, 16*)

[**virai** 'to rush, hurry'; **viraivanen** < **viraiv** + **an** + **en**]

'she, who stood feeling bashful when she came (up to me) as I called, and hugged me **who rushed** (to hug her)'

**ēm**: (1st person plural/honorific)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **ēm**)

kaṇṇōṭu celvēṁ em tāmpin oru talai paṇṇinai

(*kali.116:1-2*)

[**cel** 'to go'; **celvēṁ** < **celv** + **ēm**]

'You have grabbed one end of the rope that belongs to us **who are going** with our calves.'

**ēṇ**: (1st person singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **ēṇ**)

eṇ nalam tāṛāyō eṇa t **toṭuppēṇ** pōla

(*kali.128:10-11*)

[**toṭu** 'to hug, fasten, hook'; **toṭuppēṇ** < **toṭupp** + **ēṇ**]

'as if **I would confront** (him) and say, "Won't you give (back) my loveliness?"'

pala nāl āṛ iruḷ varutal **kāṇpērku** yāṅku ākummē ilaṅkiḷai ceṇippē

(*narr.332:8-10*)

[**kāṇ** 'to see'; **kāṇpēṇ** < **kāṇp** + **ēṇ**;

**kāṇpērku** < **kāṇpēṇ** + **ku** case marker]

'How is it possible for me, **who witness** his arrival during many difficult nights, to have tight ornaments?'

(The literary convention is that the woman's ornaments will become loose because she would grow thin in distress if there is any danger to her lover while coming at night to see her.)

yāṇ ākuval niṇ nalaṇ taruvēṇē (aka.392:28)

[tar 'to give, bring'; taruvēṇ < taruv + ēṇ]

'I shall be the one **who will bring back** your loveliness.'

**ai:** (2nd person singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + ai)

niṇ veyyaṇ āyiṇ avan veyyai nī āyiṇ (kali.107:21)

[vey 'to like'; veyyai < vey + ai]

'If he is someone whom you like and you are **someone whom he likes**, ...'

aruḷa vallai ākumati aruḷ ilar koṭāmai vallar ākuka ... niṇ pakai  
etirtōrē (pura.27:17-18, 19)

[val 'to be capable, be skilled'; vallai < val + ai]

'May **you** become one **who is skilled** in giving. May those who are facing your enmity become those skilled in not giving!'

pakaivar paṇintu tiṛai pakara k koḷḷunai ātalīṇ (pati.17:2-3)

[koḷ 'to take hold, receive, accept'; koḷḷunai < koḷḷun + ai]

'since you are **someone who accept** it as (and when) your enemies submit to you and announce their tribute'

'since you accept it as (and when) your enemies submit to you and announce their tribute'

**ōy:** (2nd person singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + ōy)

maṇaivi mel irai p paṇaittōḷ tuyil amarpōyē (narr.121:11-12)

[amar 'to settle'; amarpōy < amarp + ōy]

'O **you who settle** in sleep on the edge/curve of your wife's gentle firm shoulder'

porul vayiṇ celvōy uraṇ uṭai uḷḷattai (kali.12:9-10)

[cel 'to leave for a destination'; celvōy < celv + ōy]

'O, you who are leaving to seek wealth, you have a heart of determination.'

ōr: (3rd person human plural/honorific)

(non-past/non-completive stem + ōr)

eṇ iraval maṇṭai malarppōr yār (pura.179:2-3)

[malar 'to unfold, turn upside'; malarppōr < malarpp + ōr]

'Who is the person who will turn my begging bowl upside?'

nōṟṟōr maṇṭa tōḷi ... pirintu uṟai kātalar vara k kāṇpōrē

(kuru.344:1, 8)

[kāṇ 'to see, witness'; kāṇpōr < kāṇp + ōr]

'They are definitely fortunate, my friend, those who will see the return of their lovers who are away.'

yāṇē aṇṇiyum uḷar kol ... nōkku arum ciṟu neṟi ninaiyumōrē

(narr.104:8, 12)

[ninai 'to think'; ninaiyumōr < ninaiyum + ōr]

'Are there any aside from me, who would think of the small path (through which my lover comes) that is difficult to see?'

tēṟṟām ... kaṇ kaliḷ uku paṇi arakkuvōrē (kuru.398:1, 8)

[arakku 'to rub, press'; arakkuvōr < arakkuv + ōr]

'We do not know of someone who would wipe the tears that fill my eyes and fall down.'

nirai māṭam ūrkuvōr

(pari.10:27)

[ūr 'to climb up'; ūrkuvōr < ūrkuv + ōr]

'those who climb up the row of balconies'

yāñku aṛintaṇar ... tōḷi ... pirintu cēṇ uṛaital valluvōrē

(*kuṛu.154:1, 8*)

[**val** ‘to be capable’; **valluvōr** < **valluv** + **ōr**]

‘How did he know to be **someone capable** of living far away, being separated from me?’

‘How is he capable of living far away, being separated from me?’

vallaṇmaiṇ em varaivōr yār

(*puṛa.393:6*)

[**varai** ‘to choose, select’; **varaivōr** < **varaiv** + **ōr**]

‘Who are the people **who would choose** (to protect) us out of philanthropy?’

‘Who would choose (to protect) us out of philanthropy?’

**ōḷ**: (3rd person feminine singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **ōḷ**)

uḷaiyam ākavum **inaivōḷ** piḷaiyalal ... piritum nām eṇiṇē

(*aka.5:27-28*)

[**inaḷ** ‘to suffer’; **inaivōḷ** < **inaiv** + **ōḷ**]

‘She **who is suffering**, although we (hon.) are close by, will not survive if we depart.’

kaṭaloṭu pulampuvōḷ kalañku añar

(*kali.144:68*)

[**pulampu** ‘to cry’; **pulampuvōḷ** < **pulampuv** + **ōḷ**]

‘the agitated distress of the **woman who cries** out to the sea’

**ōṇ**: (3rd person masculine singular)

(non-past/non-completive stem + **ōṇ**)

nīyē muṇ yāṇ aṛiyumōṇē

(*puṛa.137:4*)

[**aṛi** ‘to know’; **aṛiyumōṇ** < **aṛiyum** + **ōṇ**]

‘You are the (only) **one whom I knew** before / in the past.’

## NEGATIVE PARTICIPIAL NOUNS

**GENERAL:** See “Past Participial Nouns.” The negative participial noun does not refer to a specific time. Therefore, there is only one type of negative participial noun as the counterpart of the past and the non-past affirmative participial nouns.

**FORMATION:** Negative participial nouns are formed by suffixation:

- (i) a PNG suffix beginning with a long vowel is added directly to the bare verb stem;
- (ii) **al** or **āt** is added to a bare verb stem and is subsequently followed by a PNG suffix;
- (iii) **al** is added to the non-past/non-completive stem ending with **(k)k** and is occasionally followed by **āt** and a PNG suffix or is directly followed by a PNG suffix;
- (iv) **il** is added to the past/completive stem of a verb and is subsequently followed by a PNG suffix.

See “The Negative” for information on the negative participial nouns formed by using conjugated forms of the intrinsically negative root **al** ‘not to be \_\_.’ See “The Past Stem” for information on the past stem, and “Person-Number-Gender” for the PNG categories.

PNG for negative participial nouns

- 1st person singular: **ēn**
- 1st person plural, honorific: **ām, ēm**
- 2nd person singular: **āy, i, ōy**
- 2nd person plural, honorific: **īr**
- 3rd person masculine singular: **avan, ān, ōn**
- 3rd person feminine singular: **āl, ōl**
- 3rd person human plural, honorific: **ar, avar, ār, ōr, mār**
- 3rd person neuter singular: **atu**
- 3rd person neuter plural: **a, ā**

**EXAMPLES**

Formation mechanism: suffixation

- bare verb stem + PNG with a long vowel
- bare verb stem + **al** or **āt** + PNG
- non-past stem in **(k)k** + **al** ± **āt** + PNG
- past stem + **il** + PNG

*PNG          Structure and Example*

**a:**    (3rd person neuter plural)

(bare stem + **āt** + **a**)

**ceyyāta colli c cīṇaval**

(*kali.81:27*)

[cey 'to do'; ceyyāta < cey + āt + a; ceyyāta is the object]  
 'Do not be angry, saying **what (I) did not do.**'

**atu:** (3rd person neuter singular)

(bare stem + āt + atu)

niḷal pōl tiritaruvāy eṇ nī **perātatu** (kali.61:8-9)

[peru 'to get, obtain'; **perātatu** < peru + āt + atu;  
**perātatu** is the object]

'You are wandering like (my) shadow. What is it **that you did not get?**'

**ar:** (3rd person honorific/plural)

(bare stem + al + ar)

**onnalar** eḷkuṭai valattar māvoṭu parattara (pura.274:4-5)

[on 'to agree, unite, match'; **onnalar** (enemies) < on + al + ar]

'those people **who are not agreeable** and who have the power of spears moved around with their horses, and ...'

**poruntalar** arimaṇa vāyil (aka.266:12-13)

[poruntu 'to agree, match';

**poruntalar** (enemies) < poruntu + al + ar]

'(the place) Arimaṇa Vāyil that belongs to the people **who are not agreeable / who do not match**'

**avar:** (3rd person honorific/plural)

(bare stem + āt + avar)

tōḷ turantu **aruḷātavar** pōl (kali.128:1)

[aruḷ 'to be gracious, compassionate';



**aruḷātavar < aruḷ + āt + avar]**

‘like the one **who is not compassionate** and has renounced (my) shoulders’

(non-past/non-completive stem + **al** + **āt** + **avar**)

collutal uṟṟu **uraikkallātavar**

(*kali.61:4*)

[**urai** ‘to state, declare, speak up’;

**uraikkallātavar < uraikk + al + āt + avar]**

‘those **who felt like telling but were not able to speak up**’

**avan**: (3rd person masculine singular)

(bare stem + **āt** + **avan**)

karai kāṇā nōyul **aḷuntātavanai** p purai tava k kūṟi k koṭumai nuvalvīr  
(*kali.146:25-26*)

[**aḷuntu** ‘to immerse’; **aḷuntātavan < aḷuntu + āt + avan]**

‘By saying (things) to destroy his greatness, you are talking about the cruelty of the man **who does not immerse himself** in (love)sickness that knows no bounds.’

**ā(a)**:

(3rd person neuter singular)

(bare stem + **ā**)

**uṭāa pōrā ākutaḷ aṟintum paṭāam maññaikku ṭtta em kō**

(*pura.141:10-11*)

[**uṭu** ‘to wear, wrap around’ **pōr** ‘to cover oneself with’

**uṭāa < uṭu + ā; pōrā < pōr + ā]**

‘our king who gave a shawl to the peacock although he knew that it is (a bird) **which would not wrap and cover** itself (with the shawl).’

(3rd person neuter plural)

(bare stem + glide + ā)

**ovvā yā uḷa** (*pura.167:9*)

[o 'to fit, be appropriate, agree, match'; **ovvā** < o + glide **vv** + ā]

'What are the things **which do not match** (you)?'

**ām:** (1st person honorific/plural)

(bare stem + ām)

**aḷāam** uṟaitalum uriyam (*aka.113:23*)

[aḷu 'to cry'; **aḷāam** (hon.) < aḷu + ām]

'We have a right to stay as **those who are not crying.**'

'I have a right to stay without crying.'

**āy:** (2nd person singular)

(bare stem + āt + āy)

**eṇ naliyum nōy maṭamaiyāṇ uṇarātāy** (*kali.58:11-12*)

[uṇar 'to understand'; **uṇarātāy** < uṇar + āt + āy]

'O you, **who do not understand** the (love)sickness that is hurting me.'

(non-past/non-completive stem + al + āy)

**meyyai p poy eṇru mayāṅkiya kai oṇru aṟikallāy pōri kāṇ nī**  
(*kali.95:25-26*)

[aṟi 'to know'; **aṟikallāy** < aṟik + al(l) + āy]

'See, you seem like someone **who** mistook false for truth and thus **do not know** about it.'

**ār:** (3rd person honorific/plural)

(bare stem + **ār**)

avar **poyyār** ākutaḷ teḷintaṇam (*kali.150:21-22*)

[**poy** ‘to lie, fail’; **poyyār** < **poy** + **ār**]

‘We are sure that he is **someone who would not lie.**’

enrum cānrōr cānrōr pālar āpa cālār cālār pālar ākupavē

(*pura.218:5-8*)

[**cāl** ‘to be content, be noble’; **cālār** < **cāl** + **ār**]

‘Always, those who are content belong in the group of those who are content. **Those who are not content** belong in the group of those who are not content.’

kūrattanaṇaiyai ākaliṇ **pōrrār** iraṅka viḷivatu kollō (*pura.98:17-18*)

[**pōrru** ‘to cherish, appreciate’; **pōrrār** < **pōrru** + **ār**]

‘Since you are like Death, is there indeed (going to be) a pitiful destruction of **those who do not appreciate you?**’

**onnār** yāṇai ōṭai p poṇ koṇṭu

(*pura.126:1*)

[**on** ‘to agree, unite, match’; **onnār** (enemies) < **on** + **ār**]

‘taking hold of the gold from the elephants that belong to **those who would not agree**’

evvi ēval **mēvār** neṭu miṭal

(*aka.266:11-12*)

[**mēvu** ‘to take up, accept’; **mēvār** < **mēvu** + **ār**]

‘the long (standing) strength of **those who do not accept** (the chieftain) Evvi’s command’

(non-past/non-completive stem + āt + ār)

**naḷḷātār** miṭal cāytta vallāḷa (*pura.125:5-6*)

[**naḷ** 'to befriend'; **naḷḷātār** < **naḷ** + **āt** + **ār**]

'O capable one, who defeated the strength of those who did not befriend you.'

(past/completive stem + il + ār)

**taṇ** **tamiḷ** āyvantilār kollār ik kuṇṇu payaṇ (*pari.9:25-26*)

[āyvar 'to get close, to investigate'

< āy 'to look into' + var 'to come';

āyvantilār < āyvant + il + ār]

'Those who have not investigated pleasant Tamil will not accept the result(s) of this (Paraṅkuṇṇu) hill.'

'Those who do not understand the depth of Tamil will not appreciate the nature of this hill.'

**āl**: (3rd person feminine singular)

(bare stem + āt + āl)

**nī** **nippin** **vālātāl** **mulai** (*kali.2:13-14*)

[**vāl** 'to live, prosper'; **vālātāl** < **vāl** + **āt** + **āl**]

'breasts of the woman who would not live if you leave'

**ān**: (3rd person masculine singular)

(bare stem + ān)

**aṛam** **cārān** mūppē pōl alitakkāl (*kali.38:19*)

[**aṛam** 'righteousness'; **cār** 'to lean toward'; **cārān** < **cār** + **ān**]

'she, who is perishing like the aging of a man who would not lean toward righteousness'

(bare stem + āt + ān)

or̥kattul utaviyārkkū **utavātān** (kali.149:6)

[utavu 'to help'; utavātān < utavu + āt + ān]

'the man who does not help those who helped (him) in poverty'

**i:** (2nd person singular)

(bare stem + i)

nāṇ ili nī (kali.116:17)

[nāṇ 'shame, bashfulness'; ili < il 'to be non-existent' + i]

'You are someone who do not have shame.'

**īr:** (2nd person honorific)

(bare stem + glide + āt + īr)

eṇ nīr ariyātīr pōla ivai kūṛal (kali.6:7)

[ari 'to know, understand'; ariyātīr < ari + glide y + āt + īr]

'your saying these things like someone who do not understand my nature'

'you are saying these things as if you do not understand my nature'

**ēm:** (1st person honorific/plural)

(bare stem + ēm)

yām munturūtal cellēm ... curattu alkiyēm (aka.261:11-12)

[cel 'to be possible to leave; to proceed'; cellēm < cel + ēm]

'We, not being able to leave in a rush, stayed in the forest.'

'Without proceeding further in a rush, we stayed in the forest.'

**ēn:** (1st person singular)

(bare stem + āt + ēn)

añcuvaru nōyoṭu **tuñcātēnē** (aka.45:19)

[**tuñcu** ‘to sleep’; **tuñcātēn** < **tuñcu** + **āt** + **ēn**]  
 ‘I who do not sleep due to frightening (love)sickness.’

**ōy**: (2nd person singular)

(mutated stem + **āt** + **ōy**)

**koṇkaṇai t tārātōyē** (*aink.138:3*)

[**tār** < **tar** ‘to bring’; **tārātōy** < **tār** + **āt** + **ōy**]  
 ‘you who have not brought the **Koṇkaṇ** (husband)’

**ōr**: (3rd person honorific/plural)

(bare stem + **āt** + **ōr**)

**niṇ uṇarātōrē** (*pati.51:24*)

[**uṇar** ‘to understand, reconcile’; **uṇarātōr** < **uṇar** + **āt** + **ōr**]  
 ‘those who do not understand/reconcile with you’

**iṇṇāy peruma niṇ onnātōrkkē** (*pura.94:5*)

[**on** ‘to agree, unite’; **onnātōr** < **on** + **āt** + **ōr**]  
 ‘You are not sweet, my lord, to those who are not agreeable to you.’  
 ‘My lord, you are not sweet to your enemies.’

**ōḷ**: (3rd person feminine singular)

(bare stem + glide + **āt** + **ōḷ**)

**kāntaḷ muḷu mutal ... il uyttu naṭutalum kaṭiyātōḷē** (*kuru.361:4, 6*)

[**kaṭi** ‘to avoid, prevent’; **kaṭiyātōḷ** < **kaṭi** + glide **y** + **āt** + **ōḷ**]  
 ‘mother who does not stop/prevent (me from) bringing the whole root of the **kāntaḷ** (from his mountain) to (our) house and planting it even’

**ōn:** (3rd person masculine singular)

(bare stem + āt + **ōn**)

malai keḷīya nāṭu uṭaṇ koṭuppavum koḷḷātōṇē (pura.232:5-6)

[koḷ 'to take hold, receive, accept'; koḷḷātōṇ < koḷ + āt + **ōn**]

'he **who would not accept** it even if (one) gives (him) the entire mountainous country.'

**mār:** (3rd person human plural)

(bare stem + al + **mār**)

makaḷir neytal kēḷaṇmār neṭuṅkaṭaiyāṇē<sup>1</sup> (pura.389:16, 17)

[kēḷ 'to hear']

'The women in your large courtyard will be **those who will not hear** the (sound of the) neytal drum (that announces death).'

---

<sup>1</sup> My analysis of kēḷaṇmār slightly differs from the traditional analysis. For example, Cēṇāvaraiyar considers a similar form, kāṇaṇmār to be a negative personal verb meaning 'they will not see' (cf. Tolkāppiyam, collatikāram, Cēṇāvaraiyam: 135, Rule 207).

## VERBAL NOUNS

**GENERAL:** The nominal form which is derived from a verb stem and which refers to the process/action or the result of the process/action is here called the “verbal noun.” This specification is made in order to differentiate the verbal noun from the participial noun which refers to the doer or object of the action.<sup>1</sup> As an example of a verbal noun referring to a process/action or the result of the latter, consider **uṇaṇkal** (< **uṇaṇku** ‘to dry up, be dehydrated’ + **al**): this can refer to the process of drying up, dehydration, or the neuter object which is dried up, “fish.” The literary context determines what **uṇaṇkal** refers to.

The verbal noun functions like any other nominal in that it can be declined. Two basic types of verbal noun are found in classical Tamil: affirmative and negative. See “Negative Verbal Nouns” for information on the negative type. Verbal nouns do not normally refer to a specific time.

---

<sup>1</sup> The traditional term for verbal noun is **tolirpeyar** ‘action-noun’ or **vinaiyin peyar** ‘name of the action’ (Tolkāppiyam, eḷuttatikāram, Ḵampūraṇam, Rule 297; Naṇṇūl, Rule 286). Note that in the tradition the term **tolirpeyar** also refers to a participial noun (cf. commentary on *pati.19:17*).



However, there are a few verbal nouns which contain markers that indicate a completive or an incompletive aspect of the actions denoted by the verbs from which the verbal nouns are derived. The verbal nouns which indicate a completive aspect are here called the “past verbal nouns.” See “Non-Past Verbal Nouns” for information on the non-past verbal noun.

**FORMATION:** The verbal noun is derived in the following ways:

- (i) by using the bare verb stem;
- (ii) by stem mutation;
- (iii) by suffixation: adding a verbal noun suffix directly to the stem;
- (iv) by “extension”: using a past neuter singular finite verb form, or adding the suffix **tu**, **tai**, or **mai** to a past/completive adjectival participle;
- (v) by periphrasis: the affix **um** is added to a past neuter singular finite form of a verb and is subsequently followed by conjugated forms of the verbs **il** ‘not to be ...’ or **uʔai** ‘to have.’

Among these mechanisms, (ii) and (iii) can occur separately or together. See “The Past Adjectival Participle” for information on past adjectival participles. The verbal noun is treated like a neuter singular finite verb for syntactic purposes.

The affirmative verbal noun suffixes are: **am**, **ar**, **al**, **āl**, **u**, **uʔ**, **ai**, **kkal**, **(k)ku**, **(k)kai**, **(c)ci**, **ccu**, **(t)tal**, **tī**, **tai**, **pāʔu**, **(p)pu**, **mai**, **vi**, **vu**, and **vai**. It is not possible to predict the distribution of these suffixes with the exception of **ttal** and **tal**: **ttal** occurs in transitive/effective verbs and **tal**, in non-causative/affective verbs.

## EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: using bare verb stem

varaṇ orī **vaḷaṅku** vāyppa viṭumati (pura.382:15-16)  
 [**vaḷaṅku** 'giving, providing' < **vaḷaṅku** 'to provide']  
 'Let us go, so that scarcity moves away and our (act of) **giving**  
 becomes true / a reality.'

paruntu **aruntu** urra tāṇai (pura.62:6)  
 [**aruntu** 'feeding' < **aruntu** 'to feed on']  
 'army which experienced **the eating** by the vultures'  
 'dead army, eaten by the vultures'

avar nāṭu aḷiya eyil vauvi c curramoṭu **tū** aruttaliṇ (matu:186-188)  
 [**tū** 'strength' < **tū** 'to be strong']  
 'since he besieged the (enemies') fortress as their country perished  
 and destroyed their **strength** along with their relatives'

irum iṭai miṭainta cila col (pura.243:13)  
 [**irum** 'cough; coughing' < **irum** 'to cough']  
 'the few words mixed with **coughing**'

Formation mechanism: stem mutation

- (a) In consonant-final stems, the stem-final consonant is normally hardened if it is not **y**, **r**, or **v**. And the short vowel in the monosyllabic stem is lengthened:<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> These are stems from Type (i) discussed in "Stem Classification on a Phonological Basis."

ūṭṭu aru marapiṇ aṇcuvaru pēeykku **ūṭṭu** etirkoṇṭa ... ṇimili  
(aka.142:10-11)

[**ūṭṭu** 'feeding' < **uṇ** 'to eat']  
'(the chieftain) Ṇimili who voluntarily took on (a vow to perform)  
**the feeding** of frightening ghosts which, according to legend, are  
difficult to feed'

**pūṭṭu** aru vil (aka.96:2)  
[**pūṭṭu** 'holding, fastening' < **pūṇ** 'to fasten']  
'bow whose **fastening** is cut off'

ivaṇ makaṇē tōli eṇṇaṇaḷ ataṇ aḷavu uṇṭu **kōḷ** mati vallōrkkē  
(aka.48:24-26)

[**kōḷ** 'comprehension' < **koḷ** 'to grasp, take, accept']  
'She said, "My friend, he is (my) man." Those who are skilled in  
judgement would have an **understanding** of the extent of this (state-  
ment).'

vaṭṭu **uruṭṭu** vallāy (pari.18:42)  
[**uruṭṭu** 'rolling' < **uruḷ** 'to roll']  
'O you who are skilled in **rolling** marbles.'

- (b) Stems here are non-monosyllabic and end with **u**, while the disyllabic stem has a long vowel and/or a closed syllable. The last consonant is hardened/doubled in stems with open syllables, and subsequently the short vowel in the first syllable is lengthened in the disyllabic stem. The closing consonant in the penultimate syllable is hardened in stems which have a closed syllable.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> These are stems referred to as Type (iii) in "Stem Classification on a Phonological Basis."

**taṇ miṇ cūṭṭu** (peru.282)  
 [cūṭṭu 'flesh, roasted over an open fire' < cuṭu 'to bake, barbecue']  
 'roasted fresh fish'

**poy vaḷam pūttana pāṇā niṇ pāṭṭu** (pari.18:20-21)  
 [pāṭṭu 'singing' < pātu 'to sing']  
 'Bard, an abundance of falsehood is spread in your singing.'  
 'Bard, your songs are full of lies.'

**tōḷ nekiṇtataṇ talaiyum māṟṟu ākiṇṟē ... natpē** (kuru.377:2-3, 5)  
 [māṟṟu 'change, cure, remedy' < māru 'to change']  
 'Even when (my) shoulders have become weak, (his) friendship is  
 a remedy.'

**vaiyai p perukku** (pari.7:60)  
 [perukku 'flooding' < peruku 'to flood, increase']  
 'the flooding in (river) Vaiyai'

**mayakku orī** (pura.362:11)  
 [mayakku 'confusion' < mayaṇku 'to be confused']  
 'moving away from confusion'

**accu aṟṟu ēmam āki** (pati.90:2)  
 [accu 'fear' < aṇcu 'to fear']  
 'Fear having been cut off; security coming into being, ...'

**pakai ākiṇṟu avar nakai viḷaiyāṭṭē** (kuru.394:6)  
 [viḷaiyāṭṭu 'play' < viḷaiyātu 'to play']  
 'His laughing / delightful play is becoming (a matter of) enmity.'

- (c) Stems here are monosyllabic or are disyllabic ending with **u**. The syllables are open and contain short vowels. The vowel in the first syllable is lengthened.<sup>4</sup>

yāṇ uḷ nō uraippa (narr.106:5)  
 [nō ‘suffering’ < no ‘to suffer internally’]  
 ‘as I spoke of my inner **suffering**’

mati māṛu ōrā naṇṛu uṇar cūlcci (malai:62)  
 [māṛu ‘disagreement’ < maṛu ‘to disagree’]  
 ‘planning which considers (his) wellbeing and does not think of (any) **disagreement** with (his) opinion’

piṇi viṭu peruka manṇavan (aink.447:1)  
 [viṭu ‘freedom, liberation’ < viṭu ‘to let go, let loose, release’]  
 ‘May the king attain **freedom** from (what is) binding (him now).’

Formation mechanism: suffixation

bare verb stem + verbal noun suffix  
 mutated stem + verbal noun suffix

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**am:**

(mutated stem + **am**)

vevvar ōccam (pati.41:20)  
 [ōccam < ōcc(u) + am < \*ōcu ‘to surge, rise’ + am]  
 ‘**the surge** of the heat (of war)’

---

<sup>4</sup> These are stems from Type (ii) discussed in “Stem Classification on a Phonological Basis.”

terumaral **uyakkam** (*pura.381:16*)

[**uyakkam** < **uyakk(u)** + **am** < **uyaṅku** ‘to wilt’ + **am**]

‘wilting due to wandering’

**verram** (*matu:73*)

[**verram** < **verr** + **am** < **vel** ‘to conquer’ + **am**]

‘victory’

mūvarum kūṭi aracavai irunta **tōrram** (*poru:54-55*)

[**tōrram** < **tōrr(u)** + **am** < **tōṇru** ‘to appear’ + **am**]

‘the appearance of all three (kings) being together in the royal court’

**ar:**

(bare stem + glide + **ar**)

**vevvar** ṭccam (*pati.41:20*)

[**vevvar** < **ve** ‘be hot; steam up’ + glide **vv** + **ar**]

‘the surge of the heat (of war)’

**al:**

(bare stem + **al**)

**keṭal** arum tiruva (*pura.366:17*)

[**keṭal** < **keṭu** ‘to perish, rot, spoil’ + **al**; **tiruva** (vocative)]

‘Prosperous one, difficult to perish.’

‘Unperishing prosperous one.’

(derived stem + **al**)

kollai kural vāṅki īṇā malai vāṇar alla purintu **oḷukalān** (*kali.39:13-14*)

[**oḷukal** < **oḷuku** ‘to conduct oneself, behave’ + **al**;

**oḷuku** < \***oḷu** + **ku** formative suffix]

‘With their sheaves bent, the (millet) fields will not yield, since the people living on the mountain behave / live by doing things that are not good.’

avala maṛu cuḷi **maṛukaliṇ** tavalē naṇṛu man (*pura.238:18-19*)  
 [maṛukal < maṛuku ‘to go around in circles, whirl’ + al;

maṛuku < maṛu + ku formative suffix]

‘It is better indeed to perish instead of **whirling** in the ripples of a whirlpool of distress.’

(bare stem + glide + al)

ariyal ārkaiyar (*aka.184:14*)

[ariyal < ari ‘to brew’ + glide y + al]

‘those who drink **brewed toddy**’

maṛaval ōmpumati emmē (*aka.19:9*)

[maṛaval < maṛa ‘to forget’ + glide v + al]

‘Avoid **forgetting** us.’

(mutated stem + al)

niṇa c cuṛā aṇutta **uṇakkal** (*narr.45:6*)

[uṇakkal < uṇakk(u) + al < uṇaṇku ‘to dry up, dehydrate’ + al]

‘**dried** pieces of fleshy shark’

paci pōkkal (*pura.390:27*)

[pōkkal < pōkk(u) ‘to make go, remove’ + al;

< pō(ku) ‘to go’ + al < pō ‘to go’ + al]

‘**removing** the hunger’

veḷḷi veṇ kalattu **ūṭṭal** (*pura.390:18*)

[ūṭṭal < ūṭṭ + al < uṇ ‘eat’ + al]

‘**feeding** from white silver vessels’

ilampāṭu **akaṛṛal** (*pura.381:15*)

[akaṛṛal < akaṛṛ + al < akal ‘to move away’ + al]

‘**removing** (our) state of having nothing’

**āl:** It is a variant of **al**.

(bare stem + **āl**)

pālum koḷālum vallōy (pati.16:19)

[koḷāl < koḷ ‘to receive, take hold of’ + āl]

‘You are skilled in both sharing and **taking hold / grasping**.’

**u:** Stems that take this suffix are disyllabic with open syllables, end in **u**, and have **r** or **l** preceding the stem-final **u**.

(bare stem + **u**)

kuḷūu k kaḷiṛru (puṛa.97:9)

[kuḷūu ‘crowd’ < kuḷu ‘to crowd as a group’ + u]

‘of a **crowd** of male elephants’

**uḷ:**

(bare stem + glide + **uḷ**)

vēy p peyal viḷaiyuḷ tēkkaḷ tēṛal (malai:171)

[viḷaiyuḷ < viḷai ‘to mature’ + glide y + uḷ]

‘sweet thin toddy, poured inside a (piece of) bamboo and **matured**’

**ai:**

(bare stem + **ai**)

vēṇil ōti p pāṭu naṭai vaḷalai (narr.92:2)

[naṭai < naṭa ‘to walk, move around’ + ai]

‘the slippery chameleon **moving** with difficulty in the summer’

**kkal:**

(bare stem + **kkal**)

oru kāḷ viral muṛai curri mōkkalum mōntaṇaṇ (kali.54:7-8)

[mōkkal < mō ‘to sniff’ + kkal]



‘He wound one string (of flowers) properly around his finger and even had a sniff.’

*inmai uraittārkkū atu niraikkal āṟṟākkāl* (kali.43:26)

[*niraikkal* < *nirai* ‘to fill up, fulfill’ + *kkal*]

‘when (he is) not able to bring fulfillment for those who spoke of their having nothing’

(k)ku:

(bare stem + *kkū*)

*tolir cerukku aṇantar*

(aka.37:6)

[*cerukku* < *ceru* ‘to exult’ + *kkū*]

‘drowsiness due to the exultation of work’

(bare stem + *ku*)

*iralai ... melkiṭu kavuḷa*

(aka.34:4, 8)

[*melkiṭu* < *melku* ‘cud’ + *iṭu* ‘to drop’;

*melku* ‘that which was chewed’ < *mel* ‘to chew’ + *ku*]

‘deer whose mouths drop the cud’

(k)kai:

(bare stem + *kkai*)

*uyar ciṇai muṭai naci irukkai p peṭai*

(aka.51:3-4)

[*irukkai* < *iru* ‘to be, remain’ + *kkai*]

‘the female (bird) sitting on a high branch with a desire for flesh’

(bare stem + *kai*)

*tirkai viṭukkum paṇpu*

(pura.391:9)

[*tirkai* < *tir* ‘to end, leave, vanish’ + *kai*]

‘the nature of giving up (the idea of) vanishing’

**cārikai maṟuttu t taṇṭā uṇṭikai** (pari.6:36)

[**uṇṭikai** ‘crowd, lump’ < **uṇṭai** + **kai**;

**uṇṭai** ‘globe, sphere’ < **uruṇṭai**

< **uruḷ** ‘to become round, globular’ + **tai**]

‘unrestrained crowd (of elephants and horses) which gave up moving on’

(bare stem + **i** + **kai**)

**cārikai maṟuttu t taṇṭā uṇṭikai** (pari.6:36)

[**cārikai** ‘moving on’ < **cār** ‘to lean, move on’ + **i** + **kai**]

‘unrestrained crowd (of elephants and horses) which gave up moving on’

(mutated stem + **i** + **kai**)

**kārikai nīr nōkkinai** (pari.7:65)

[**kārikai** < **kār** ‘dark’ (< **karu** ‘to be dark’) + **i** + **kai**]<sup>5</sup>

‘the glance that has the quality of being dark’

‘the glance of brown eyes’

(c)ci:

(bare stem + **cci**)

**mati māṟu ōrā naṇṟu uṇar cūlcci** (malai:62)

[**cūlcci** < **cūḷ** ‘to plan’ + **cci**]

‘planning which considers (his) wellbeing and does not think of disagreement with (his) opinion’

<sup>5</sup> Note that in later Tamil, **kārikai** refers to a woman, probably to a dark one, by metonymy.

(bare stem + **ci**)

vēru al **kāṭci** iruvēm

(*aka.73:9-10*)

[**kāṭci** < **kāṇ** 'to see, view' + **ci**]

'we two with **views** that are not different'

**ccu:**

(bare stem + **ccu**)

cāṭiyiṇ **vaḷaiccu** ara viḷainta ... naṟum piḷi

(*peru:280, 281*)

[**vaḷaiccu** < **vaḷu** 'be tender, slimy' + **ccu**]

'good smelling extract/liquor that matured in a jar without being slimy'

(**t**)**tal:**

(bare stem + **ttal**)

neṭum perum kuṇṇam emmoṭu **iṟattal**

(*aka.19:5-6*)

[**iṟattal** < **iṟa** 'to pass' + **ttal**]

'**passing beyond/through** the tall big hill with us'

(bare stem + **tal**)

taṇ citaivu **aṟital** aṇci ... eṇ makaḷ i-c-curam paṭartantōḷē

(*aka.7:9, 12-13*)

[**aṟital** < **aṟi** 'to know' + **tal**]

'Afraid of me **knowing** about her blemish, my daughter proceeded to this forest.'

**ti:**

(bare stem + **ti**)

**koṇṭi** uṇṭi

(*peru:454*)

[**koṇṭi** < **koḷ** 'to take hold of, grab' + **ti**]

'food/consumption made out of **looting**'

niṇ ārvalar toḷuta kai **amaitiyiṇ** amarntōyum nīyē (pari.4:70-71)

[**amaiti** < **amai** 'to settle, stay undisturbed' + **ti**]

'You are the one who sat/settled in an **undisturbed state** of the worshipping hands of your devotees.'

**venriyoṭu** vil alaittu uṇṇum val āṇ vāḷkkai (aka.31:12-13)

[**venri** < **vel** 'to conquer, defeat' + **ti**]

'life of skilled men who eat **successfully** by hustling with their bows'

**tai:**

(bare stem + **tai**)

pulavar ... nāvil puṇainta naṇ **kavitai** (pari.6:7, 8)

[**kavitai**

< **kavi** 'to overspread, inundate, surpass, extend' + **tai**]<sup>6</sup>

'the good **spontaneity/poetry** of the poets'

(mutated stem + **tai**)

**muṭantai** nel (pati.29:3)

[**muṭantai** < **muṭam** + **tai** < **muṭa** 'to be bent, crooked' + **am** + **tai**]

'paddy (sheaves) which are **bent**'

**pāṭu:** This is not a suffix. It is a verbal noun meaning 'experience' derived from the verb **paṭu** 'to befall, experience.' It is added like a suffix to a nominal stem to derive a larger verbal noun.

(bare stem + **pāṭu**)

nī cellā viṭuvāyēl ... neṭṭirum kūntal kaṭavuḷar ellārkkum **muṭṭuppāṭu**

ākalum uṇṭu

(kali.93:33, 35-36)

<sup>6</sup> Compare **kaviṇ** 'fascinating beauty; abundance of beauty.'

[**muṭṭuppāṭu** ‘obstacle’

< **muṭṭu** ‘to knock against something’ + **pāṭu**]

‘If you do not go, **an obstacle** might arise for all those goddesses with long dark tresses.’

(derived stem + **pāṭu**)

on cūṭar **vaḷappāṭu**

(*pari.2:64*)

[**vaḷappāṭu** < **vaḷam** ‘abundance’ + **pāṭu**]

‘the **abundance** of bright flames’

(mutated stem + **pāṭu**)

**ilampāṭu** akaṛṛal

(*pura.381:15*)

[**ilampāṭu** < **ilam** ‘absence’ + **pāṭu**;

**il** ‘to be non-existent, absent’ + **am** + **pāṭu**]

‘removing (our) **state of having nothing**’

(p)pu:

(bare stem + **ppu**)

**marappu** inru

(*pura.381:24*)

[**marappu** < **marā** ‘to forget’ + **ppu**]

‘without **forgetting**’

(bare stem + **pu**)

nam **piripu** aṛiyā ... naṛṛōḷ

(*aka.41:11, 12*)

[**piripu** < **piri** ‘to separate self’ + **pu**]

‘lovely shoulders/arms which do not know **separation** from us’

**mai:**

(bare stem + **mai**)

ceḷunakar naṭuvaṇ **aṭumai** y eḷunta aṭu ney āvuti

(*pati.21:12-13*)

[**aṭumai** < **aṭu** ‘to cook, kill’ + **mai**]

‘smoke that arose from the offering of ghee (to the gods) in the center of the wealthy house due to **cooking**’

**ēlāittanmai**

(*kali.55:23*)

[**ēlāittanmai**

< **ēlai** + **tanmai** (**tan** oblique of **tān** ‘self’ + **mai** ‘ness’)]

‘the nature of being poor’

**vi:**

(bare stem + **vi**)

**vē|vi** murriya ... vēntē

(*pura.26:15*)

[**vē|vi** < **vē** ‘to wish for’ + **vi**]

‘O king who have completed/accomplished (your) wish.’

‘O king who completed the Vedic sacrifice.’

**vu:**

(bare stem + **vu**)

**ampu ka|aivu**

(*pati.24:13*)

[**ka|aivu** < **ka|ai** ‘to remove’ + **vu**]

‘removal of the arrows’

**vai:**

(bare stem + **vai**)

**vēyvai** kāṇā viruntin pōrvai

(*pura.369:20*)

[**vēyvai** < **vēy** ‘to bend, warp’ + **vai**]

‘new face of the harp (pōrvai) which does not know (any flaw due to) **bending**’

**Formation mechanism:** Extension — using a past neuter singular finite verb form; or adding **tu**, **tai**, or **mai** to a past/completive adjectival participle. This type of verbal noun can be construed as the “past verbal noun.”

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**(a)tu:**

(past/completive stem + **atu**)

or (past adjectival participle + **tu**)

inīṭākinrāl ... nī vantu **ninratu**

(aka.184:4, 19)

[**nīl** ‘to stand’]

‘Your coming and **standing** (there) have become (a) pleasant (matter).’

‘It is nice that you came and stood (there).’

**(a)tai:**

(past/completive stem + **atai**)

or (past adjectival participle + **tai**)

tēriya ciṛappaṇrō ... nirai vaḷai **nekiṇtatai**

(kali.132:13, 15)

[**nekiṇ** ‘to loosen’]

‘The (reason for the) **looseness** of the row of (my) bangles is the excellence of his reassurance, is it not?

‘The reason my bangles are loose is that he reassured me nicely but did not keep his promise, is it not?’

puruvattu k karu val kantattāl tāṅki iv ulakam tantu **aṭippaṭuttatai**  
 naṭuvaṇ ṭṇkiya palar pukaḷ kuṇṇiṇṭu okkum (*pari.4:22-24*)

[**aṭippaṭu** ‘to fall at someone’s feet’

< **aṭi** ‘feet’ + **paṭuttu** ‘to cause X to fall at Y’]

‘Causing the world to be at (your) feet (when it was immersed in the flood) in the past by bringing it (back) carrying it on (your) strong dark nape, is similar to (the act of) the tall (Mēru) mountain which emerged from the flood and is praised by many.’

**mai:**

(past adjectival participle + **mai**)

**pīlāittamai** ‘wrong doing’

(*aka.366:15*)

[**pīlāittamai** ‘wrong doing’

< **pīlāitta** adjp of **pīlai** ‘to wrong’ + **mai**]

Formation mechanism: Periphrasis

past/completive stem + **an/in** + **tu** + **um/ō**

**um** or **ō** is added to the neuter singular finite form of a verb, and the **u** in **tu** is morphophonemically deleted from the structure — past/completive stem + **an/in** + **tu** + **um/ō**. This structure is invariably followed by conjugated forms of the verbs **uṭai** ‘to have, be with’ or **il** ‘to be non-existent, absent.’ This type of verbal noun can be construed as the “past verbal noun.”

### *Structure and Example*

(past/completive stem + **an** + **tu** + ... **ō ilam**)

muṇitaku paṇpu yām **ceytanrō** ilamē

(*aka.101:18*)

[**cey** ‘to do’; **ceytanrō** < **ceytanru** ‘the act of doing’ + **ō** (particle)

**ceytanru** < **ceyt** + **an** + **tu**; it is like **ceytatu** ‘the act of doing’]



**‘We have not done anything that has the nature of being frustrated about.’**

(past/completive stem + **an** + **tu** + **um** + **ilan**)

**ilamaiy<sub>i</sub>n ikantan<sub>u</sub>rum ilanē** va<sub>l</sub>amaiy<sub>i</sub>n ta<sub>n</sub> nilai t<sub>i</sub>rntan<sub>u</sub>rum ilan  
(*kuri*:244-245)

[ika ‘to despise, move away’; t<sub>i</sub>r ‘to swerve, deviate from, depart, vanish’

**ikantan<sub>u</sub>rum < ikant + an + tu + um;**

**t<sub>i</sub>rntan<sub>u</sub>rum < t<sub>i</sub>rnt + an + tu + um]**

**‘He has not despised (us) because of his youth; neither has he swerved from his (normal) state because of (the abundance of) his wealth.’**

(past/completive stem + **in** + **tu** + **um** + **ilan**)

**en<sub>i</sub> vay<sub>i</sub>n colla vallir<sub>u</sub>rum ilanē** (*aka*.32:14-15)

[**val** ‘be capable’; **vallir<sub>u</sub>rum < valli + in + tu + um]**

**‘He was not able to speak out to me either.’**

(past/completive stem + **in** + **tu** + **um** + **ilai**)

**n<sub>i</sub>ti<sub>n</sub>ar en<sub>u</sub>num pulavi u<sub>t</sub>ko<sub>n</sub>tu ū<sub>i</sub>ti<sub>n</sub>rum ilaiyō** (*narr*.237:4-5)

[**ū<sub>i</sub>tu** ‘to sulk’; **ū<sub>i</sub>ti<sub>n</sub>rum < ū<sub>i</sub>ti + in + tu + um]**

**‘Have you not been sulking either, holding back within yourself the anger that he has delayed (to return)?’**

(past/completive stem + **in** + **tum** + **u<sub>t</sub>ai**)

**emmo<sub>t</sub>u varutiyō ... e<sub>n</sub>a k kūr<sub>i</sub>n<sub>u</sub>rum u<sub>t</sub>aiyar** (*narr*. 274:6-7)

[**kūr<sub>u</sub>** ‘to say, state’; **kūr<sub>i</sub>n<sub>u</sub>rum < kūr<sub>i</sub> + in + tu + um]**

**‘He even said “Will you come with me?” ’**

## NON-PAST VERBAL NOUNS

**GENERAL:** Verbal nouns do not normally indicate any specific time. A few verbal noun forms conclusively indicate a completive or incompletive aspect of the actions indicated by the verbs from which the verbal nouns are derived.<sup>1</sup> Among them, the non-past verbal noun form can be construed as signifying the present or the future. Context determines whether this verbal noun is to be understood as present or future. See also “Verbal Nouns,” and the chapters on participial nouns and “The Non-Past Stem.”

**FORMATION:** The non-past verbal noun is derived by suffixation: **atu** or **atai** is added to a non-past/non-completive stem that ends with (p)p or v. Alternatively stated, a non-past neuter participial noun in **atu** or **atai** is used. This type of verbal noun, which bears a similarity to the

---

<sup>1</sup> E.g., vantu **ninratu** ‘waiting; having arrived’ (*narr.229:11*), **varuvatu** ‘that which will come/happen’ (*pura.366:12*), **kilippatu** ‘the tearing’ (*aka.72:1*).

participial noun, is sometimes used to convey the sense of a neuter singular personal verb. An example is given below.

### EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: non-past/non-completive stem + **atu** or **atai**

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**atu**:

(non-past/non-completive stem + **atu**)

iruḷ **kilippatu** pōḷ minṇi (aka.72:1)

[**kili** ‘to tear’; **kilippatu** < **kilipp** + **atu**]

‘lightning as if **tearing** the sky’

iravu k **kāṇpatu** pōla p perum kaṭal ōta nīr viṇkupu karai cēra (kali.134:5-6)

[**kāṇ** ‘to see; look at’; **kāṇpatu** < **kāṇp** + **atu**]

‘the big ocean’s foamy water swelled up and reached the shore as if the night (opened its eyes and) was **looking**’

**varuvatu** nāṭi (pura.366:12)

[**var** ‘to come, arrive, happen’; **varuvatu** < **varuv** + **atu**]

‘seeking / looking for **what is coming** / about to happen’

vicumpu **urivatu** pōḷ viyal iṭattu oḷuki maṅkul mā maḷai tenṇulam  
paṭarum paṇi irum kaṅkul (aka.24:7-9)

[**uri** ‘to peel’; **urivatu** < **uriv** + **atu**]

‘cold dark midnight, when the dark rain cloud is moving southward in the vast space as if the sky is **peeled**’

muṭintatum **muṭivatum mukilppatum** avai mūṇrum (pari.13:46)

[**muṭi** 'to come to an end'; **mukil** 'to emerge, bud'

**muṭivatu** < **muṭiv** + **atu**; **mukilppatu** < **mukilpp** + **atu**]

'those three such as that which has ended, **that which is coming to an end**, and **that which will emerge**'

iṇimai evaṇ **ceyvatu** poymmoḷi emakkē (aka.6:22)

[**ceyvatu** 'the doing' (verbal noun) < **cey** 'to do']

'What sweetness **will** (your) false words **do** for me?'

(Note that the verbal noun is used to convey the sense of a finite verb meaning 'will do'.)

### atai:

(non-past/non-completive stem + **atai**)

iṇṇātē ... kaḷiru iyaṅku āriṭai iṅku nī **varuvatai** (kali.49:19, 21)

[**var** 'to come, arrive'; **varuvatai** < **varuv** + **atai**]

'Your **arrival** through the difficult forest, where male elephants move around, is not pleasing.'

## NEGATIVE VERBAL NOUNS

GENERAL: See “Verbal Nouns.”

FORMATION: Negative verbal nouns are formed by suffixation, by first adding **ā** to the bare verb stem if the verb is not intrinsically negative (**al** ‘not to be ...’ or **il** ‘to be non-existent’) and subsequently adding the verbal noun suffix **mai**. If the verb is intrinsically negative, the verbal noun suffix **mai** is directly added to the stem.

Neither the affirmation-negation distinction nor the distinction in person-number-gender is made by the verbal noun suffix **mai**. Verbal nouns are treated like neuter singular verbs for syntactic purposes.

### EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: suffixation

bare stem + **ā** + **mai**

negative **al** or **il** + **mai**

*Suffix      Structure and Example***mai:**(bare stem + ā + **mai**)avaṇ **nalkāmai**yiṇ ampāl āki (aka.102:16, 17)[**nalku** ‘to be gracious, compassionate’;**nalkāmai** < **nalk(u)** + ā + **mai**]‘since he **did not show** compassion, rumor developed and ...’(bare stem + glide + ā + **mai**)yāṇar ūraṇ kāṇunaṇ āyiṇ **varaiyāmai**yō aritē (narr.390:7-8)[**varai** ‘to choose, marry’; **varaiyāmai** < **varai** + glide y + ā + **mai**]‘If the Ūraṇ from the bounteous town sees her, it would be impossible (for him) **not to choose** (her for his bride).’(negative **al** or **il** + **mai**)avai niṇakku **iṟumpūtu aṇmai** naṟku aṟintēm (pari.4:3-4)[**iṟumpūtu** ‘wonder’; **aṇmai** < **al** ‘not to be ... ’ + **mai**]‘We know well that those things **are not wonders** for you.’**pāyal inmai**yiṇ pācilai ṇekila (pati.68:15)[**pāyal** ‘sleep’; **inmai** < **il** ‘to be non-existent’ + **mai**]‘as the women’s bright ornaments become loose **since there is no sleep** (and consequently she is growing thin)’



## SECTION 5





## A NOTE ON PARTICIPLES

GENERAL: Participles are derived from verb stems and, so far as classical Tamil is concerned, can be divided into two types: the nominal and the verbal.<sup>1</sup> In this study, the nominal participle is referred to as the “adjectival participle.” The verbal participles are here sub-divided into several categories: the adverbial participle, the infinitive, the conditional, the causal, the concessive of fact, and the concessive of supposition.<sup>2</sup>

The participle is like a verb in that it contains a past/completive marker or a non-past/non-completive marker. It is never declined; that is, case markers are never added to a participle, but certain postpositions (**aḷavai**, **uḷi**, **kaṭai**, **kaṇ**, **kāl**, and **pin**) can follow or be added to an adjectival participle. See under the chapters on the adjectival participles and the case markers and postpositions.

---

<sup>1</sup> The traditional terms are **peyar eccam** (nominal participles) and **vinai eccam** (verbal participles).

<sup>2</sup> The tradition does not employ different names for the sub-categories of the verbal participle.

**The Nominal Participle:** In classical Tamil, the past adjectival participle and the non-past adjectival participles are derived respectively from the past/completive stem and the non-past/non-completive stem of a verb. The affirmative adjectival participle indicates a completive or an incomplete phase of the action/state indicated by the verb from which it is derived. When the participle is negative, it signifies the absence or “non-happening” of the state/action indicated by the verb from which it is derived. In either case, the subject of that verb is a nominal which is the “completing nominal” or the “head noun.” The completing nominal need not be the subject of the main sentence. However, the adjectival participle and its head noun / completing nominal reside in the same clause in the sentence, with the participle preceding the completing nominal. A sentence may have many clauses, with a nominal participle and its respective completing nominal co-residing in any clause. See the chapters on adjectival participles for examples.

**The Verbal Participle:** The affirmative verbal participle indicates a completive or an incomplete phase of the action/state indicated by the verb from which it is derived. When the participle is negative, it signifies the absence or “non-happening” of the action/state indicated by the verb from which it is derived. Whether affirmative or negative, the occurrence or the absence of the action/state indicated by the verbal participle precedes, follows, or takes place simultaneously with another action/state, which can be called the “completing/concluding action/state.” The completing action/state is the action/state of the main verb in the same clause as that of the verbal participle, but need not be the one indicated by the main verb in the main sentence. Moreover, the completing action/state can be affirmative or negative, even when the participle is negative.

A verbal participle and the verb of its completing action/state reside in the same clause. Also the participle does not always share its subject

with that of its completing action/state. A sentence may have many clauses, with a verbal participle and its respective completing action/state co-residing in any clause.

There are two factors to be considered for understanding the relation between the action/state indicated by the verbal participle and its completing action/state: the sequence in which these two actions/states happen and how they affect each other. When the action/state of the verbal participle and its completing action/state do not co-occur, the action/state of the participle may be a result, a purpose, a condition, or a cause with regard to its completing action/state.

The positive adverbial participle and a few conditionals are derived from the past/completive stem of a verb, whereas the infinitive, the negative adverbial participle, and some conditionals are derived from the non-past/non-completive stem of a verb. The causal is derived from certain verbal nouns. The concessive of fact and the concessive of supposition are derived from the bare verb stem, certain non-past/non-completive stems, the past/completive stem, the adverbial participle, or the conditional. For the specifics, see "The Concessive of Fact" and "The Concessive of Supposition."

The infinitive translates as 'to do verb.' The "verb" is the verb from which the infinitive is derived. The action/state indicated by the infinitive co-occurs, precedes, or follows its completing action/state; when they do not co-occur, the action/state of the infinitive is the result or the purpose of the completing action/state and vice versa. The adverbial participle translates as 'X having done verb . . .' or 'X did verb and ... .' The "X" is the subject of the verb. The action/state indicated by an adverbial participle precedes and results in its completing action/state. The conditional translates as 'if X verb(s/ed/en).' The action/state indicated by the conditional precedes and is a condition for its completing action/state. The causal translates as 'since X verb(s/ed/en).' The action/state indicated by the causal precedes and is a cause for its completing action/state. The concessive of fact can

be translated as 'even though X verb(s/ed/en).' It provides a sense of actual occurrence or materializing of the action/state indicated by the verb underlying it. The action/state indicated by the concessive of fact precedes and results in its successive action/state. The concessive of supposition can be translated as 'even if X verb(s/ed/en).' It provides a sense of an assumed occurrence or materializing of the action/state indicated by the verb underlying it. The action/state indicated by the concessive of supposition also precedes and results in its successive action/state.

In all these cases, the verbal participle is followed by a completing/concluding/successive action/state denoted by a verb in the same clause. See all the chapters on these participles for examples.

## THE PAST ADJECTIVAL PARTICIPLE

(Past Relative Participle)

**GENERAL:** See “A Note on Participles” for more general information. The adjectival participle is derived from a verb and indicates the completive or non-completive state/action of the verb while modifying a nominal which follows the verb. The nominal modified by the adjectival participle is the participle’s own subject but need not be the subject of the finite verb in the main sentence. It can be anywhere to the right of the participle in the same clause, not necessarily to the immediate right.<sup>1</sup>

Two types of adjectival participles are found in classical Tamil — the affirmative and the negative. Only the affirmative kind can be divided into the “past” and the “non-past” adjectival participles. See “The Negative Adjectival Participle” for information on the negative type, and “Adjectives or Noun Modifiers” for the relation between the adjective and the adjectival participle.

---

<sup>1</sup> The traditional term for an adjectival participle in Tamil is **peyareccam**, literally, ‘remains of a nominal.’

**FORMATION:** The past affirmative adjectival participle is derived by suffixation. The suffix **a** is added to the past stem of the verb. See “The Past Stem” for information on the notion of “the past” and “the past stem.”

While no person-gender distinction is made, a distinction between the singular and the plural is rarely made by the past adjectival participle suffix indicating negation.

### EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: past/completive stem + **a**

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**a:**

(past stem + **a**)

**vēṅkai tāaya tēm pāy tōṛram** (aka.12:10)

[**tā** ‘to scatter, spread’; **tāaya** < **tāy** + **a**; **vēṅkai** ‘veṅkai flowers’;  
**tōṛram** ‘view’]

‘the honey-filled view of scattered vēṅkai flowers’

**uḷuta nōṇ pakaṭu** (pura.125:7)

[**uḷu** ‘to plow’; **uḷuta** < **uḷut** + **a**]

‘strong bull which plowed (the land)’

**kēṇi uṇ tuṛai t tokka pāci** (kuru.399:1-2)

[**toku** ‘to collect’; **tokka** < **tokk** + **a**; **pāci** ‘algae’]

‘the algae which has collected in the section (allocated) for drinking water from the well’

kaṭu vaḷi **tokutta** neṭu veṇ **kuppai** (kuṟu.372:2)

[**toku** ‘to collect’; **tokutta** < **tokutt** + **a**; **kuppai** ‘pile’]  
 ‘tall white **pile** (of sand) **which** the gusty wind **collected**’  
 ‘tall white pile (of sand) which was collected by the gusty wind’

maṇṭu amar **aṭṭa** maṭaṇ uṭai **nōṇrāḷ** (puṟa.213:1)

[**aṭu** ‘to kill, destroy’; **aṭṭa** < **aṭṭ** + **a**; **nōṇrāḷ** ‘diligent effort’]  
 ‘strong **diligent effort** **which** destroyed the upsurging war’

nī **kāṭta** **nāṭu** (pati.13:28)

[**kā** ‘to protect, shield’; **kāṭta** < **kātt** + **a**; **nāṭu** ‘country’]  
 ‘the country **which** you **protected**’

puli p **pal** **kōṭta** pulampu maṇi t **tāli** (aka.7:18)

[**kō** ‘to string’; **kōṭta** < **kōtt** + **a**; **tāli** ‘talisman’;  
**pulampu** ‘to resound, to be alone’]  
 ‘the **tāli** (talisman) **in** **which** a tiger’s teeth are strung together  
 with jingling bells’  
 ‘the **tāli** (talisman) in which a tiger’s teeth are strung together with  
 a single bell’

taṭakkai **uyartta** **yāṇai** (tiru:158)

[**uyar** ‘to rise’; **uyartta** < **uyartt** + **a**; **yāṇai** ‘elephant’]<sup>2</sup>  
 ‘the elephant **which** raised its big strong trunk’

---

<sup>2</sup> Note that in modern Tamil, it is **uyarttiya** < **uyarrttu** ‘raise’ + **i** past marker + glide **y** + **a** adjp suffix.



**uyarnta utavi** (matu.743)  
 [uyar 'to be lofty, noble'; uyarnta < uyarnt + a; utavi 'help']  
 'noble help'

**mā malai payanta kāmaru maṇi** (pura.218:2)  
 [paya 'to yield'; payanta < payant + a; maṇi 'gem']  
 'desirable gem which the dark mountain yielded/released'

**avarai arunta manti** (aink.271:1)  
 [aruntu 'to eat'; arunta < aruntiya < arunti + glide y + a;  
 manti 'female monkey']  
 'the monkey which ate pea pods'

**vaṇṭu paṭa olinta kūntal** (pati.31:23-24)  
 [oli 'to bring forth the inner life; shine'; olinta < olint + a;  
 kūntal 'tresses']  
 'hair that grew brilliantly attracting the bees'  
 'shiny hair that attracts the bees'

**tēṛal aṛiyātu uṇṭa kaṭuvan** (aka.2:5)  
 [uṇ 'to eat'; uṇṭa < uṇṭ + a; kaṭuvan 'male monkey']  
 'the male monkey which ate the nectar unknowingly'

**taṇ tuḷikku ēṛra painkoṭi mullai** (kuru.382:1)  
 [ēl 'to respond by accepting'; ēṛra < ēṛr + a; mullai 'jasmine']  
 'the jasmine in the green vine which responded to the cool raindrops'

**koṭaikkaṭaṇ ēṇra kōṭā neṇciṇ utiyan** (aka.168:6-7)  
 [ēl 'to take on'; ēṇra < ēṇr + a; utiyan a personal name]  
 'Utiyan, with a non-devious heart, who took on the duty of giving'  
 'non-devious Utiyan who accepted the duty of giving'

uḷ ānra oli (kali.126:8)

[ān 'to be content, contained'; ānra < ānr + a; oli 'sound']

'sound (of the bell) which is contained'

'muffled sound'

(past stem + in + a)

nī vāḷtal īyā vaḷan aru paitiram anna āyina paḷanam tōrum ...

tāmarai āmpaloṭu malarntu nellin ceruvil neytal pūppa

(pati.19:17-21)

[ā 'to be'; āyina 'that which became ...' < āy + in + a

paitiram 'green fields'; anna 'like'; paḷanam 'field']

'Lotus flowers and water-lilies bloomed in every field which turned into an unfertile green field upon which you did not bestow (the gift of) life, while the neytal flowers bloomed in paddy fields, and... '

pōna nilam ellām

(pari.22:11)

[pō 'to go'; pōna < pōyina < pōy + in + a;

nilam 'land, region']<sup>3</sup>

'all the lands where (the flood) went/entered'

tuvarina vānku tuḷai t tukirin īnkai pūppa

(aka.243:1-2)

[tuvar 'to be divided/coiled, to turn red';

tuvarina < tuvari + in + a]

---

<sup>3</sup> Compare pōyinā (kali.115:12) and pōyinru (narr.56:10). See also "The Past Stem" and "A Note on the Verb ān."

Some might treat the n in pōna as a "hiatus filler" and derive pōna thus: pō-k(u)-i-n-a > pōyina > pōna, and hold that the past tense suffix has a zero-allomorph in pōna (cf. Zvelebil 1970:41).

‘The Īṅkai bloomed like **coral which turned red** with curved hollow stems.’

(past stem + glide + a)

killi pōkiya ... maṇram (pura.220:6, 7)

[pō(ku) ‘to go, depart, leave for’; pōkiya < pōki + glide y + a;  
maṇram ‘courtyard’]

‘the **courtyard which Killi went from**’

‘the courtyard which Killi left’

ciṟukārōṭaṇ payiṇoṭu cērttiya kal (aka.1:5, 6)

[cērttu ‘to make join, unite’; cērttiya < cērtti + glide y + a]<sup>4</sup>

‘the **stones which the man who sharpens objects joined together**  
with glue/paste’

kuṇra vaippiṇ kāṇam cenru cēṇ akaṟal valliya nī (narr.137:9-10)

[val ‘be capable’; valliya < valli + glide y + a; nī ‘you’]

‘**you who are capable of departing (to a) faraway (place) (by)**  
going through the hilly forest’

perum kai yāṇai k kōḷ piḷaittu irīiya aṭu puli (aka.118:8-9)

[iri ‘to flee’; irīiya < irīi + glide y + a; puli ‘tiger’]

‘**destructive tiger which escaped from being caught by an elephant**  
with a big trunk and **fled**’

‘destructive tiger which escaped from the grasp of an elephant with  
a big trunk and fled’

---

<sup>4</sup> In modern Tamil, the adjectival participle giving the sense ‘joined’ is cērtta, which should be derived from cēr ‘to join’ (cēr + tt + a).

## THE NON-PAST ADJECTIVAL PARTICIPLE

(The Present and Future Relative Participles)

**GENERAL:** For more general information on participles, see “A Note on Participles” and “The Past Adjectival Participle.” There is a participle form, the “non-past” adjectival participle, which can be interpreted as either the “present” or the “future” adjectival participle. The context determines which is appropriate.

There is only one type of the non-past adjectival participle, namely the affirmative. For the negative type, see “The Negative Adjectival Participle” and “Adjectives or Noun Modifiers” for the relation between the adjective and the adjectival participle.

**FORMATION:** The non-past adjectival participle is derived by suffixation:

- (a) the suffix **a** is added to a periphrastic non-past/non-completive stem;

- (b) the suffix **ūu** is added directly to a bare verb stem while **um** is added directly to a bare verb stem or to a non-past/non-completive stem ending with **(k)k** or **pp**.

No person-number-gender distinction is made by the non-past adjectival participle suffix. See “The Non-Past Stem” for information on the non-past/non-completive stem.

## EXAMPLES

### Formation mechanism: suffixation

periphrastic non-past/non-completive stem + **a**  
 non-past/non-completive stem ending with **(k)k**  
 or **pp** + **um**  
 bare verb stem + **ūu/um**

### *Suffix      Structure and Example*

**a:**

(periphrastic non-past/non-completive stem + **a**)<sup>1</sup>

tīramum vaiyaiyum cērkinra kaṇ kaviṇ (pari.22:35)

[cēr ‘to join, unite’; cērkinra < cērkinr + **a**;

kaviṇ ‘fascinating beauty, abundance of beauty’]

‘the eye-soothing beauty (that arises) where / when (the river)  
 Vaiyai joins the bank’

paṇi aṭūuninra pānāḷ kaṅkul (aka.125:11)

[aṭu ‘to destroy, kill’;

aṭūu nil ‘to stand destroying, continue to destroy/kill’

<sup>1</sup> See “The Non-past Stem” for obtaining the periphrastic non-past/non-completive stem.

**aṭūu ninra** < **aṭūu ninr** + **a**; **kaṅkul** ‘midnight’]  
 ‘midnight when the cold is killing’

**kūrru aṭūu ninra yākkai** (pati.13:11)  
 [yākkai ‘body’; see above example]  
 ‘bodies which Death continues to destroy’

**maṭa māṇ viḷikkaṇ pētaiyoṭu iṇaṇ irintu ōṭa k kāmara neṇcamoṭu ...**  
**tēṭūu ninra iralai ēru** (narr.242:7-10)  
 [tēṭūu nil ‘to stand searching, continue to search’;  
**tēṭūu ninra** < **tēṭūu ninr** + **a**; **iralai ēru** ‘stag’]  
 ‘the stag which continues to search for its mate which ran away  
 from its group along with its innocent-looking young one’

**um:**

(bare stem or non-past/non-completive stem + **um**)

**i-n-nōy porukkal ām varaittu aṇri p peritu āyiṇ** (kali.58:20-21)  
 [ā ‘to be’; **ām** < **ā** + **um**; **varaittu** ‘it is in the limit’]<sup>2</sup>  
 ‘if this (love)sickness becomes big/chronic without being in the  
 limit of bearing’  
 ‘if this lovesickness becomes chronic without control’

**kaḷiru ... tēr nīrkku avāam kāṇam** (kali.7:1, 2-3)  
 [avā ‘to desire’; **avāam** < **avā** + **um**; **kāṇam** ‘forest’]  
 ‘forest where the male elephant(s) desire(s) the mirage’

**taṇ tuṇai p pirintu ayāam taṇi k kuruku** (kali.121:16)  
 [ayā ‘to agonize’; **ayāam** < **ayā** + **um**; **kuruku** ‘heron’]

<sup>2</sup> Some might consider **ām** to be a contracted form of **ākum** ‘it will be.’

**‘lonesome heron which is agonizing, being separated from its mate’**

irum kaḷi mutalai mēen tol (aka.3:1)

[mē ‘to cover, spread’; mēen < mēem < mē + um; tōl ‘skin, hide’;

The stem-final m changes to n.]<sup>3</sup>

**‘hide covering the crocodile in the deep backwaters’**

vēḷam ... tam kuḷuvoṭu puṇarntu pōm kunru (kali.25:9, 10-11)

[pō ‘to go’; pō < pō + um; kunru ‘hill’]

**‘hill where the elephants go with their group’**

maḷai vēṇṭu pulattu māri nirpa (pati.13:26)

[vēṇṭu ‘to wish for’; vēṇṭu < vēṇṭu + um; pulattu ‘in the region’]

**‘as the rain clouds stayed in the regions where the rain was needed’**

**‘as the rain clouds stay in the regions where the rain is needed’**

kuṇṛattu p paḷaṅkuḷi akaḷnta kāṇavaṇ kiḷaṅkiṇoṭu kaṇṇakaṇ tū maṇi

perūu nāṭaṇ (kuru.379:1-3)

[peru ‘to obtain, get’;

perūu < peru + um; nāṭaṇ ‘man from the country’]

**‘the man from the country, where the hill-man when digging an old ditch in the hill gets pure big gems together with tubers’**

naṇ kalam tarūum maṇ paṭu mārpa (pati.21:19)

[tar ‘to bring’; tarūum < tar + um; mārpa ‘O man with ... chest’]

**‘O man with a chest tainted with (the enemies’) soil, who brings lovely treasure (from enemy countries).’**

---

<sup>3</sup> Some might treat mē(m) as an adjective meaning ‘top.’

**varūum amayam** (matu:477)  
 [var 'to come, emerge'; varūum < var + um; amayam 'time']  
 'the time which is (forth)coming'

kaṇṇu tantu ... nallūr maṇṇattu p piṇikkum ... vēṇkaṭaṇkiḷavōṇ (pura.389:9-10, 11)  
 [piṇi 'to bind, tie up'; piṇikkum < piṇikk + um;  
 vēṇkaṭam 'Vēṇkaṭam hills']  
 'he who has a claim for the Vēṇkaṭam where they bring and tie up  
 elephant calves in the good village courtyard'

pataviṇ vār kural kaṇikkum ... varai ā (kuru.363:2, 3)  
 [kaṇi 'to nibble'; kaṇikkum < kaṇikk + um;  
 varai ā 'mountain cow']  
 'the mountain cow which nibbles on the long bunches of the  
 patavu-grass'

cuṭar tuyar eṭuppum ... mālai (kuru.398:5)  
 [eṭu 'to arouse'; eṭuppum < eṭupp + um; mālai 'evening']  
 'evening when the flames (of the lamps) arouse the grief (of separation)'

niṇaikkum kālai maruṭkai uṭaittē (pura.217:1)  
 [niṇai 'to think'; niṇaikkum < niṇaikk + um; kālai 'at the time']  
 'When thinking about it, it seems amazing.'  
 'Come to think of it, it is amazing.'

kōṭiyar tūmpin uyirkkum atta k kēḷal (aka.111:9-10)  
 [uyir 'to breathe, gasp'; uyirkkum < uyirkk + um;  
 kēḷal 'boar']  
 'the wild boar which gasps like the horns of the Kōṭiyar'



kuḷaviyoṭu pacumaral **kaṭkum** kāntaḷ vēli c **cirukuṭi** (*kuṛu.100:2-3*)  
 [kaḷi 'to weed, pick'; **kaṭkum** < kaṭk + um;

**cirukuṭi** 'small residences']

'**small residences** with kāntaḷ for fence where (people) **weed out** the wild jasmine together with the green maral-vines'

(non-past/non-completive stem + glide + um)

kayam **kaḷiyum** kōṭai (*pura.389:3*)

[kaḷi 'to dry up to become clay'; **kaḷiyum** < kaḷi + glide y + um;

**kōṭai** 'summer']

'**summer when** the ponds **dry up** (into clay)'

ōmpātu **īyum** āṙṛal em kō (*pura.22:33*)

[ī 'to bestow'; **īyum** < ī + glide y + um; kō 'king']

'our skillful **king** who bestows without hiding (what he has)'

**ninaiyum** kālai nīyum marṛu avarkku aṇaiyai allai (*pura.213:7-8*)

[**ninai** 'to think, consider'; **ninaiyum** < **ninai** + glide y + um;

**kālai** 'at the time']

'**When thinking** about it, you are not like that toward them either.'

'Come to think of it, you are not their enemy either.'

**ū**<sup>4</sup>:

(bare stem + **ū**)

**etirkolūū nālam** tuyil ārātu ānkaṇ mutirpu eṇ mēl muṛṛiya vennōy  
uraippin ... matiyum atirvatu pōl ōṭi c cuḷalvatumaṇ

(*kali.146:38-41*)

[**etirkol** ‘to welcome’; **nālam** ‘the earth’]

‘If I talk about my chronic (love)sickness, even the moon will run  
around in circles as if it is shaking, and **the earth which welcomes**  
it (the moon) will not get any sleep.’

---

<sup>4</sup> Note that **ū** is also an infinitive suffix, which means that it signifies a non-past/non-completive aspect.

## THE NEGATIVE ADJECTIVAL PARTICIPLE

(Negative Relative Participle)

**GENERAL:** For general information on the adjectival participle, see “A Note on Participles” and “The Past Adjectival Participle,” and “The Negative” for general information on negative forms.<sup>1</sup>

The negative adjectival participle does not refer to a specific time. The context determines what time is meant by the negative adjectival participle. Therefore, there is only one type of negative adjectival participle as the counterpart of the “past” and the “non-past” affirmative adjectival participles.

**FORMATION:** The negative adjectival participle is derived by suffixation.

- (i) adding **ā** or **āta** directly to the bare verb stem or to a non-past/non-completive stem ending with **(k)k**. See “A Note on the Verb **ā**” for the use of **ā** as a negative suffix;

---

<sup>1</sup> The traditional term for the negative adjectival participle is **etirmaṛai p peyareccam** “nominal participle signifying negation.”

- (ii) adding **al** before adding **ā** or **āta** to a non-past/non-completive stem ending with **(k)k**.

While no person-gender distinction is made, a distinction between the singular and the plural is sometimes made by the negative adjectival participle suffix. The participle with the suffix **āta** modifies a singular noun, whereas such a restriction is absent in the case of **ā**.

### EXAMPLES

#### Formation mechanism: suffixation

bare stem + **ā(ta)**

non-past stem ending with **(k)k** + **ā(ta)**

non-past stem ending with **(k)k** + **al** + **ā(ta)**

#### *Suffix      Structure and Example*

**ā:**

(bare stem + **ā**)

**kalañkā c ceñkōl**

(*pura.230:4*)

[**kalañku** ‘to be agitated, be confused’; **kalañkā** < **kalañku** + **ā**  
**ceñkōl** ‘perfect staff’]

‘perfect staff/sceptre which does not swerve’

**poyyā eḷini**

(*pura.230:6*)

[**poy** ‘to lie, fail’; **poyyā** < **poy** + **ā**; **eḷini** a personal name]

‘**Eḷini** who does not fail’

**koṭāa uru keḷu mannar**

(*pura.392:5-6*)

[**koṭu** ‘to give’; **koṭāa** < **koṭu** + **ā**; **mannar** ‘kings’]

**‘frightening kings who do not give (to the suppliants)’**

(See “Lengthening of Sounds [aḷapeṭai] and Vowel Clusters” for information on vowels like āa.)

(bare stem + glide + ā)

nī vāṭtal īyā vaḷaṇ aṟu paitiram (pati.19:17-18)

[ī ‘to bestow, provide’; īyā < ī + glide y + ā;

paitiram ‘green fields’]

‘unfertile enemy lands for which you do not provide a (good) life’

nīnaiyā mākkal

(aka.305:16)

[nīnai ‘to think, consider’; nīnaiyā < nīnai + glide y + ā;

mākkal ‘people’]

‘people who do not consider’

‘inconsiderate people’

cāvā marapiṇ amarar

(pari.2:71)

[cā ‘to die, wither’; cāvā < cā + glide v + ā;

amarar ‘gods, immortals’]

‘gods with a legend of not dying / not being weary’

‘immortal gods’

(non-past/non-completive stem in k + ā)

īrkku iṭai pōkā ēr iḷa vaṇa mulai

(poru:36)

[pō ‘to go, enter’; pōkā < pōk + ā; īrkku ‘straw’; mulai ‘breasts’]

‘beautiful young breasts between which (even) a straw cannot go’

(non-past/non-completive stem in kk + al + ā)

paruntu parakkallā p pārval pācarai

(matu.231)

[**para** 'to fly'; **parakkallā** < **parakk** + **al(l)** + **ā**;  
**pācarai** 'war camp']

'war camp with a view where vultures cannot fly'

(Note that the word **pārval** in this example can also be analyzed as **pār** 'seeing' + **val** 'capable.')

(non-past/non-completive stem in **k** + **al** + **ā**)

katir **nuḷaikallā** maram payil kaṭi **miḷai** (pura.21:5)

[**nuḷai** 'to penetrate, enter'; **nuḷaikallā** < **nuḷaik** + **al** + **ā**; **miḷai** 'barrier forest']

'guarded forest, a barrier filled with trees, through which the rays (of the sun) cannot enter'

**āta**:

(bare stem + **āt** + **a**)

oru tiram **olkāta** nērkōl (kali.42:14)

[**olku** 'to sway, swerve'; **olkāta** < **olku** + **āt** + **a**;  
**nērkōl** 'perfect scale']

'perfect scale which does not sway to one side'

(bare stem + glide + **āt** + **a**)

veyil oḷi **aṟiyāta** ... taṇ **kā** (kali.30:7)

[**aṟi** 'to know'; **aṟiyāta** < **aṟi** + glide **y** + **āt** + **a**]

'cool grove which does not know sunlight'

(non-past/non-completive stem in **k** + **al** + **āt** + **a**)

kaṇai **kaḷikallāta** kal piṇṇu **āriṭai** (kali.20:21)

[**kaḷi** 'to pass through'; **kaḷikallāta** < **kaḷik** + **al** + **āt** + **a**;  
**āriṭai** 'difficult path']

'difficult rocky path through which an arrow cannot pass'

## THE ADVERBIAL PARTICIPLE<sup>1</sup>

**GENERAL:** See “A Note on Participles” for more general information on participles and “Adverbs” for the use of the adverbial participles as adverbs. The adverbial participle translates as ‘X having done verb ...’ or ‘X did verb and ... .’ The “X” is the subject of the verb underlying the adverbial participle. The action/state indicated by an adverbial participle precedes and results in its successive/completing action/state.

**FORMATION:** The adverbial participle is derived by suffixation.

(a) **i/y** is added to a bare stem;

(b) **u** is added to the past/completive stem ending with a consonant<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> “Converbial” is another modern term referring to the adverbial participle (cf. Hart and Hart 1979:142-143).

<sup>2</sup> The only exception seems to be that the past/completive stem of the intrinsically negative verb **il** ‘to be non-existent’ takes the adverbial participle suffix **i** or **u**.

There are two types of adverbial participle suffixes — affirmative and negative. See “The Negative Adverbial Participle” for the negative type. No person-number-gender distinction is made by the adverbial participle suffix. The affirmative adverbial participle suffixes are *i*, *y*, and *u*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In some modern analyses, “the adverbial participle has no morpheme at all” (cf. Zvelebil 1970:41; also Ananthakrishna Pillai 1972:369 and Tokunaga 1981:25). In Zvelebil’s system of analysis, forms like *ōṭ-i* ‘having run’ are segmented as root *ōṭ/u-* + past morpheme *-i*; forms like *makil-ntu* ‘having exulted’, as root *mak-* + derivative suffix *il* + past morpheme *-nt/u*, where *-u* is an automatic non-morphemic phoneme. Thus, the “... adverbial participle is identical with the past stem (past theme of the verb).”

There is no doubt that some adverbial participle forms (i.e., those ending with *i/y*) are identical with their corresponding past/completive stems. Nevertheless, I deliberated over the concepts of past/completive stem and adverbial participle, and finally decided to treat the adverbial participle as distinct from the past stem largely for the practical purposes of this study and specifically because the past/completive stem has a wider use than the adverbial participle.

The past/completive stem serves as a base for deriving certain forms while the adverbial participle does not. For example, consider *irumpu vaṭittanna* *karum kai-k-kāṇavaṇ* ‘the forest man who has strong/dark arms as if (they are) cast in iron’ (*aka.172:6*), where *vaṭittanna* < *vaṭitt* past/completive stem + *anna* ‘like’ (particle of comparison). The adverbial participle form in this case would be *vaṭittu*, which would not be the base for a particle like *anna*. In some editions of classical Tamil poetry, one may find *vaṭittanna* printed as *vaṭittu anna* for the sake of clarity. But one should remember that *vaṭittu anna* would not provide the right metrical pattern unlike the right form *vaṭittanna*. Now, consider *vēṅkai koykuvam cenṛuli* ‘when we went to pick vēṅkai flowers’ (*aka.48:6*). Here, *cenṛuli* < *cenṛ* past/completive stem of *cel* ‘to go’ + *uli* postposition. The adverbial participle form of *cel*, which is *cenṛu*, cannot be considered as the base for *cenṛuli*. If any, the adjectival participle form *cenṛa* might be taken as the base for *cenṛuli*.

As illustrated in these examples, the past/completive marker in some cases is consonantal: *t*, *tt*, or *nt*. The adverbial participle of verbs that take this consonantal marker ends with the suffix *u* which is normally considered as an enunciative vowel or as an “automatic non-morphemic -u” (cf. Zvelebil 1967:101, note 78). Nevertheless, for practical purposes, it would not be wrong to consider the past/completive stem (e.g., *vaitt* or *cenṛ*) and the adverbial participle (e.g., *vaittu* or *cenṛu*) as distinct in these cases.



## EXAMPLES

### Formation mechanism: suffixation

bare verb stem + *i/y*

past/completive stem ending with a consonant + *u*

### *Suffix      Structure and Example*

**i:**

(bare stem ± glide + *i*)

aṇṇai ... māṇ kaviṇ paṇṭaiyiṇ ciṇakka eṇ makaṭku eṇa p paraii ...

kaḷaṇ ilaittu ... vēlaṇ ... tūṅkal vēṇṭiṇ ... eṇ ām kollō

(*aka.98:6, 12-13, 14, 18, 20-21*)

[para ‘to pray’; paraii < para + *i*]

‘What will happen, I am afraid, if mother prays “May my daughter’s elegant beauty get better than before” and prepares the arena (for

Adverbial participle forms ending with *i/y*, on the other hand, are identical with their corresponding past stems, and therefore they can be properly said to have a zero participle suffix. When one finds examples like *ūṭṭi aṇṇa* oṇ taḷir-c-ceyalai ‘ceyalai leaves which look like they are painted’ (*aka.68:5*) or *eḷuti aṇṇa* tiṇ nilai k katavam ‘the doorway which looks like it was drawn/painted’ (*aka.311:3*), one realizes that *ūṭṭi* and *eḷuti*, derived respectively from *ūṭṭu* ‘to paint, feed color’ and *eḷutu* ‘to write, draw, paint’ can be labelled either as past/completive stems or as adverbial participles.

Even in these cases, if the adverbial participle suffix is assumed to be *i/y*, which would trigger the process of haplology when added to the past stem in *i/y*, one could have the merit of reducing all adverbial participles to a single formula: past stem + adverbial participle suffix, which would apply to modern Tamil also (cf. Hart and Hart 1979:142). Otherwise one would have to have two derivations for the adverbial participle in classical Tamil: bare stem + *i/y*; past/completive stem + *u*.

the ritual dance) and wants Vēlaṇ (the priest of Murukaṇ) to (perform the ritual) dance?’

mulai p pūṇoṭu ... mārpaṇi kalavi arivaiyar amirta pāṇam urimai  
mākkaḷ uvakai amirtu uyppa ... āṅku ... kātalarum allārum kūṭi  
k kaṭampu amar celvaṇ kaṭi nakar pēṇa

(*pari.8:118-121, 124-126*)

[kala ‘to mingle, mix’ (intransitive); kūṭu ‘to gather; get together’;

kalavi < kala + glide v + i; kūṭi < kūṭu + i]

‘(While they bathed in the river), the jewelry on women’s breasts **mixed** with the ornaments on their lovers’ chests; and the nectar (on the lips) of young women triggered the ecstatic nectar of their men. Thus, the lovers and others **gathered** there and worshipped the shrine of the lord (Murukaṇ) who resides in the kaṭampu tree.’

vīṅku piṇi nōṇ kayiṇu arīṭi itai puṭaiyūu ... neṭuñ cuḷi p paṭṭa nāvāy  
pōla

(*matu:376, 379*)

[ari ‘to sever’; arīṭi < ari + i]

‘like a ship which was caught in a whirlpool, **having severed** its strong taut mast rope, and with its mast fluttering’

kaṇicci pōl kōṭu cīṭi ēṇu toḷūu p pukuttaṇar

(*kali.101:8-9*)

[cī ‘to whittle, sharpen’; cīṭi < cī + i]

‘They **sharpened** the horns (to look) like a trident and drove the bulls into the stall.’

uṭumpu **korīi** vari nuṇal akaṇtu ... muyal eṇinta vēṭṭuvan

(*narr.59:1, 3*)

[**koru** 'to kill'; **koru** + i]<sup>4</sup>

'the hunter who **killed** a mountain lizard (uṭumpu), dug out tadpoles, and shot (arrows at the) rabbits'

netun tēr kaṭṭiṇṇuṇ vīci ... ariya tantu kuṭi **akarri** p periya karu  
icai **viḷakki** ... nāḷum maṭṭiṇtu iṇitu uṇaimati peruma

(*matu:752, 766, 777, 780-782*)

[**vīcu** 'to provide abundantly, give away'; **akarri** 'to make spread, expand'; **viḷakku** 'to make ... brilliant'; **vīci** < **vīcu** + i;

**akarri** < **akaru** + i; **viḷakki** < **viḷakku** + i]

'O lord, may you always exult and live well, **giving away** tall chariots together with male elephants, bringing in (to your land) precious things, **expanding** (the families of) your subjects, and **making** your **reputation brilliant** by learning great things.'

vaṇṇamum tuṇaiyum **porīi** eṇṇātu emiyēm tuṇinta ēmam cāl aru  
viṇai

(*kuri:31-32*)

[**poru** 'to match, compare'; **porīi** < **poru** + i]

'a rare secure act, which we ourselves deliberated without thinking of **comparing** qualities and kinship'

eṇṇai p porukkallā nōy ceytāy **porīi** niṇukkallēṇ (*kali.94:10-11*)

[**poru** 'to tolerate, bear with'; **porīi** < **poru** + i]

'You gave me unbearable (love)sickness. I am not able to bear with it and sustain.'

<sup>4</sup> This is the only attested example of this verb. It could be a corrupted form of **kol** 'to stab.'

puṇal maṇṭi āṭal purivāṇ caṇam maṇṭi ... mēkalai ēṇi p paṭu kāl  
 iṟukiṟuka t tāḷ iṭṭi ... parūu k karai naṇṇi ... nīraṇi kāṇpōr  
 (*pari.10:9, 10-11, 26, 27*)

[iṭu ‘to let down, drop’; iṭṭi < iṭu + i]

‘People were crowded in order to rush to the flood (in the river Vaiyai). Among them (were) those who **let** the locket on their mēkalai (i.e., waist ornament) **down** and tightened its several strands and proceeded to the big river bank, and watched the beauty of the water ...’

aḷuta kaṇṇē ... kuvaḷai vaṇṭu payil pallitaḷ **kalaii** t taṇ tuḷikku ēṙṛa  
 malar pōṇṛaṇavē (*kuṟu.291:5, 6-8*)

[kalai ‘to be in disarray’; kalaii < kalai + i]

‘Her eyes, which shed tears, looked like kuvaḷai flowers whose many petals, having been swarmed by the honeybees, **were disarrayed and** responded to cool fresh raindrops.’

māya varaviṇ iyalpu **ninaii** t tēṙri ... īriya kaliḷum ivaḷ ... kaṇ  
 (*kuṟi:246, 248*)

[ninai ‘to think, consider’; ninaii < ninai + i]

‘tear-filled eyes of this woman who is reconciled, **having considered** the uncertain nature of (her lover’s) visit’

kaṭi naṟai **pukaii** k kākkam vammō katal am tōḷi (*puṟa.281:6-7*)

[pukai ‘to smoke; burn and raise smoke’; pukaii < pukai + i]

‘My dear friend, come, let us (raise) **smoke** (by burning) the protective fragrance and shield (the warrior’s wounds from the animals).’

ciṟu tiṇai **uṇṭi** ... uyar cimai k kēḷal uṟaṅkum naṇ malai  
 (*aiṅk.268:2, 3-4*)

[uṇ ‘to eat’; uṇṭi < uṇ + i]

‘the good mountain where pigs, **having eaten** the small millet, sleep on the tall peak’

eḷuvaroṭu **muraṇi** c ceṇṇu amar kaṭantu niṇ āṇṇal tōṇṇiya aṇṇum  
pāṭunarkku ariyai (pura: 99:9-11)

[**muraṇ** ‘to contradict’; **muraṇi** < **muraṇ** + **i**]

‘You were difficult for the singers (to sing about) even on that day when you revealed your skills by **contradicting** the seven (kings) and going and defeating (them) in the war.’

vaḷai nīr mēyntu kiḷai mutal **celīi** vāpparai virumpiṇai āyiṇum ...  
cīritu iruntu ... veṇkuruku eṇava kēṇmati (narr.54:1-2, 3, 4)

[**cel** ‘to leave for a destination’; **celīi** < **cel** + **i**]

‘O white heron, although you want to feed on the (fish in the) wavy water and **reach** your kith and kin and fly away, wait a little and listen to what I say.’

elli vantaṇrō tēr eṇa c **colli** alar eḷuntaṇṇu iv-ūrē (narr.191.6-7)

[**col** ‘to reveal, state’; **colli** < **col** + **i**]

‘Gossip arose in this town **saying** that a chariot came (to town) last night.’

vaiyai akam ... cīr amai pāṭal payattāl kiḷar cevi **tevi** ... ampi  
karavā vaḷakkirṇu (pari.11: 61, 69, 67)

[**tev** ‘to snatch, grab’; **tevi** < **tev** + **i**]

‘The middle of Vaiyai does not conceal the movement of the boats (because of) **snatching** (everyone’s) ears by the effect of rhythmic songs (of the women in the boats).’

cēvalum nakai vāy k **koḷīi** nakutoṇṇum viḷikkum (narr.218:3-4)

[**koḷ** ‘to have, take hold’; **koḷīi** < **koḷ** + **i**]

‘And the rooster, **holding** joy in its mouth, calls whenever it rejoices.’  
 nal il pal vēru paṇṭamōṭu ūṇ malintu **kaviṇi** malaiyavum nilattavum  
 nīravum pīravum

pal vēru tiru maṇi muttamōṭu poṇ koṇṭu ciṟanta tēettu p paṇṇiyam  
 pakarnar (matu:502-506)

[**kaviṇ** ‘to be abundant in beauty, decorative, fascinating’;

**kaviṇi** < **kaviṇ** + i]

‘merchants who are **attractive/fascinating** because they live in households filled with many different things and foods and who sell in excellent countries many different rich gems, pearls, and gold which come from the mountains, land, sea, and other places’

u<sup>5</sup>:

(past/completive stem + u)

tā ciṇai **piḷantu** tāru aṭu kaḷirriṇ vīru perā ōcci k kal eṇ cuṟra k  
 kaṭuṇ kural avittu em collal pāṇi niṇṟaṇaṇ (kuri:149-152)

[**piḷa** ‘to split, break’; **piḷantu** < **piḷant** + u]

‘He **broke** a wide branch, raised it high majestically like a male elephant that is destroying the mahout’s spear and controlled the harsh barking of the hounds, and stood for the moment of our talking.’

puli aṇci k kuru naṭai k kaṇru uṭai vēlam niṇru **kāttu** alkum ... neṟi  
 (narr.85:4-6)

[**kā** ‘to shield, protect’; **kāttu** < **kātt** + u]

<sup>5</sup> Zvelebil considers this u to be an “automatic non-morphemic -u” (cf. Zvelebil 1967:101, note 78).

‘the path where the elephant, being afraid of the tiger, stands and **shields** its toddler-calf’

irantōr vēṇṭiya **koṭuttu** avai tā eṇ collinūm innātō nam in uyir ilappē  
(*kurū.349:5-7*)

[**koṭu** ‘to give away’; **koṭuttu** < **koṭutt** + **u**]

‘Is losing our sweet life more unpleasant than **giving** what the suppliants wanted and saying “Give them back” ?’

tāl niḷal maruṅkil aṇukupu kuṟuki **toḷutu** muṇ niṟkuvir āyiṇ  
(*poru:149-150*)

[**toḷu** ‘to worship, bow’; **toḷutu** < **toḷut** + **u**]

‘If you would get close to the vicinity of (his) feet’s shadow, **bow in worship**, and stand in front (of him) ... ‘

māru **porutu** ṭṭiya pukalviṇ  
(*kuṟi:135*)

[**poru** ‘to fight back, match’; **porutu** < **porut** + **u**]

‘like the bull which **fought back and** drove away its opponent’

irum puṇam niḷattaliṇ ... nōy **mikku** ... vīlaiyar veṭi paṭuttu etira  
(*kuṟi:157, 158, 161*)

[**miku** ‘to increase’; **mikku** < **mikk** + **u**]

‘since it destroyed the dark millet field, men whistling, their anger **having increased**, created a huge commotion (in the field) and came in front (of the elephant), and ... ‘

**ventu** āru poṇṇiṇ anti pūppa  
(*aka.71:6*)

[**ve** ‘to boil, steam up’; **ventu** < **vent** + **u**]

‘as the (light of the) dusk spread like gold that is cooling off, **having been boiled/melted**’

**nontu nontu** eḷutu eḷil uṇkaṇ pāvai ... vellam n̄ntum nāl  
(*narr.177:8-10*)

[**no** 'to suffer internally'; **nontu** < **nont** + **u**]  
'the day when I **suffer again and again** and the apple of my beautiful decorated attractive eye would swim in the flood (of tears)'

**āṭavar** ... viḷuppuṇ kāṇiya puṇaṇ **pōntu** ... tiritarum vēntaṇ  
(*neṭu:171, 172, 187*)

[**pō** 'to go'; **pōntu** < **pōnt** + **u**]  
'the king who **went outside** in order to look at the warriors' wounds of war and walks around'

**nīyum kaṇṭu** numaroṭum eṇṇi aṇivaṇintu aḷaval vēṇṭum (*narr.32:5-6*)  
[**kāṇ** 'to see/think over'; **kaṇṭu** < **kaṇṭ** + **u**]  
'You must **see** for yourself, consider it along with your kin, know all that must be known, and evaluate.'

veṇ pal nakai **māṇṭu** ilaṅku nalam keḷu tuvar vāy (*aka.162:12-13*)  
[**māṇ** 'to be perfect, elegant'; **māṇṭu** < **māṇṭ** + **u**]  
'shining coral-like mouth, filled with loveliness and **elegant** with the brightness of the smile of (her) white teeth'  
'her lovely shiny coral-like red mouth which is elegant with bright smile'

**nuṇ pul** ... eyiṇṇiyar ... nila ural **peytu** ... ulakkai ōcci ... vārātu aṭṭa  
puḷukkal (*peru:94, 96, 97, 100*)

[**pey** 'to pour'; **peytu** < **peyt** + **u**]  
'cooked rice, the fine grains of which the hunter-women **poured** into the mortar made in the ground and pounded with a pestle and cooked without washing'



muṛṛā iḷantaḷir koytu koṇṭu uppu **inru** nīr ulai āka ēṛri mōr **inru** aviḷp  
 patam maṇantu pācaṭaku micaintu ... tuvvāḷ ākiya eṇ veyyōḷ  
 (*puṛa.159:10-12, 14*)

[iḷ ‘to be absent, not to exist’; **inru** < **inr** + u]

‘my wife who picks and takes the young tender leaves, cooks them in water **without** salt, eats the greens **without** buttermilk and forgetting the rice, and does not enjoy (life)’

neṭun tēr kaḷiṛroṭum vīci ... ariya tantu kuṭi akaṛṛi p periya **kaṛru**  
 icaḷi viḷakki ... nāḷum maḷiḷntu iṇitu uṛaimati peruma  
 (*matu:752, 766-767, 780-781*)

[kaḷ ‘to mature by experience, learn’; **kaṛru** < **kaṛr** + u]

‘O lord, may you always exult and live well, giving away tall chariots together with male elephants, bringing in precious things (to your land), expanding (the families of) your subjects, and making your reputation brilliant by **learning** great things.’

aruṅkarai kaviya k kutti kuḷi **konru** perum kai yāṇai piṭi pukkāṅku  
 (*paṭṭi:223-224*)

[kol ‘to stab’; **konru** < **konr** + u]

‘as if a trapped elephant with a big trunk (escaped and) united with its mate, by **stabbing** the trench so that the complicated steps (in the trench) caved in’

‘as if a trapped elephant with a big trunk **destroyed** the trench making the complicated steps (in the trench) cave in and united with its mate ‘

(Note that **kol** does not mean ‘to take away one’ s life.’)

uṭumpu koṛi vari nuḷal **akaḷntu** ... muyal eṛinta vēṭṭuvan  
 (*naṛṛ.59:1, 3*)

[akaḷ ‘to dig (out)’; **akaḷntu** < **akaḷnt** + u]

‘the hunter who killed a mountain lizard, **dug out** tadpoles and chased rabbits’

tuvarai āṇṭu nārpaṭtu oṇṭatu vaḷi muṇai vanta vēḷiruḷ vēḷē  
(*puṛa.201:10-12*)

[āḷ ‘to rule over’; āṇṭu < āṇṭ + u]

‘O the best Vēḷ (chieftain) among the group of Vēḷir who **ruled over** the city of Tuvurai and lasted for forty nine generations.’

muṛṛā iḷantaḷir koytu koṇṭu uppu iṇṇu nīr ulai āka ēṇṇi mōr iṇṇu aviḷ p  
patam maṇantu pācaṭaku micaintu ... tuvvāḷ ākiya eṇ veyyōḷ  
(*puṛa.159:10-12, 14*)

[koḷ ‘to take, draw toward self’; koṇṭu < koṇṭ + u]

‘my wife who picks and **holds** the premature tender leaves, cooks them in water without salt, eats the greens without buttermilk and forgetting the rice, and does not enjoy (life)’

nīṭu vālka eṇṇu yāṇ neṭum kaṭai kuṛuki p pāṭi niṇṇa paci nāl  
(*puṛa.237:1-2*)

[nīḷ ‘to be long; extend’; nīṭu < nīṭ + u]

‘hungry day(s) when I approached (his) tall doorway and stood singing “May you live long.”

ēṇṇu kaṇṭai ... veruvaru tūmam eṭuppa vekuṇṭu tiritarum kol kaḷiṇṇum  
pōṇṇm  
(*kali.104:42, 43-44*)

[vekuḷ ‘to be enraged; be roused’; vekuṇṭu < vekuṇṭ + u]

‘Look at this bull. It is like an elephant which is **enraged and** wanders when frightening smoke rises.’

pōr vēṭṭu ... muṇai keṭa c ceṇṇu ... ūr kaviṇ aḷiya p perum pāl  
ceytum amaiyāṇ  
(*paṭṭ:234, 238, 269, 270*)

[vē] ‘to wish for’; vēṭṭu < vēṭ + u]

‘Wishing for war and going through the battle-front as it perished, he would not stay calm even after making great destruction to towns which lose their beauty/attraction.’

ittu ānru ānā iṭaṇ uṭai vaḷaṇ

(pati.32:6)

[ān ‘to be content with’; ānru < ānr + u]

‘wealthy bounty that does **not cease** (to exist even) when the (act of) giving (has) stopped’

kiḷai k kavinru eḷutaru kiḷ nīr c cev arumpu

(tiru.29)

[kavin ‘to be decorative; fascinate’; kavinru < kavinr + u]

‘the red buds which rise up from the low-waters **decorating** the branches’

y:

(bare stem + y)

peru nal vāṇattu p paruntu ulāy naṭappa

(paṭṭ:233)

[ula ‘to move around’; ulāy < ula + y]

‘as the vultures **move around** and fly in the lovely big sky’

kāl eṇṇa k kaṭitu urāy nāṭu keṭa eri parappi ... aracu paṭa amar  
uḷakki kaḷam vēṭṭa ... vēntē

(matu.125-126, 128, 129)

[ura ‘to spread’; urāy < ura + y]

‘O king, who performed the war sacrifice by **spreading** (your army) fast like the wind and spreading fire so that (enemy) countries are destroyed, and stirring up the war so as the (enemy) kings are killed.’

kāay k koṇṭa num iyam toypaṭāmal

(malai.365)

[kā ‘to lift by hanging’; kāay < kā + y]

‘so that your instruments, which you are carrying by **hanging**, do not sag’

katum eṇa k karaintu vam eṇa k kūuy ataṇ muṛai kaḷippiya piṇrai  
(*poru:101-102*)

[kū ‘to call out’; kūuy < kū + y]

‘He invited us immediately and **called out** “Come,” and went through the conventions (related to the invitation). After that, ...’

kaṭampiṇ kaṭi uṭai muḷu mutal tumiya ēey veṇru eṛi muḷaṅku paṇai  
ceyta vel pōr (*pati.11:12-14*)

[ē ‘to command, order’; ēey < ē + y]

‘the war at which (the king) **commanded** (his warriors) to chop the bulky trunk of the enemies’ well-guarded kaṭampu tree and conquered and made a roaring drum (out of the tree)’

## THE NEGATIVE ADVERBIAL PARTICIPLE

**GENERAL:** See “A Note on Participles” and “The Adverbial Participle.” The negative adverbial participle translates as ‘X, without doing verb ...’ or ‘X did not do verb and ... .’ The “X” is the subject of the verb underlying the adverbial participle. That is to say that when the participle is negative, it signifies the absence or “non-happening” of the action/state indicated by the verb from which it is derived.

**FORMATION:** The negative adverbial participle is derived by suffixation in the following ways:

- (i) adding just **ā** directly to the bare stem or following the **ā** with **mai** or **mal**;
- (ii) adding **āt** to the bare stem and following it with **u** or **ē**;
- (iii) adding **al** to the non-past/non-completive stem ending with **(k)k** and subsequently following it with **āt + u**;
- (iv) adding **i** directly to the intrinsically negative verb **il** or to the past/completive stems of the intrinsically negative verbs **al** and **il**;

(v) adding **u** to the past/completive stem of the intrinsically negative verb **il**.

No person-number-gender distinction is made by the negative adverbial participle suffix.

### EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: suffixation. See above in "Formation."

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**ā(a)**<sup>1</sup>:

(bare stem ± glide + **ā**)

pūvē ... taṇ uṛu viḷumam **ariyā** meṇ mela t teṛu katir iṇ tuyil pacu  
vāy tiṛakkum (narr.275:2, 4-5)

[**ari** 'to know, realize'; **ariyā** < **ari** + glide **y** + **ā**]

'The flowers, **without realizing** the grief that they are about to experience, slowly and gently open their fresh mouths in their pleasant sleep in the light of the destructive rays (of the sun).'

pākaṇum niṭṭittāy eṇṛu kaṭāam kaṭum tiṇ tēr pūṭṭu **viṭāa** niṛuttu  
(kali.66:23-25)

[**viṭu** 'to let go, release'; **viṭāa** < **viṭu** + **ā**]

'And the chariot driver would rush the strong fast chariot (even) **without releasing** its lock because you were delayed (here).'

---

<sup>1</sup> Note that **ā** occurs as an infinitive suffix also, but giving a positive sense. See "The Infinitive" and "A Note on the Verb **ā**."

**ā(a)tu:**

(bare stem + āt + u)

vaḷaimakaḷ **kuṛāatu** malarnta āmpal (pati.23:23-24)

[**kuṛu** 'to pick'; **kuṛāatu** < **kuṛu** + **āt** + **u**]

'water-lilies which opened up **without** the woman with bangles **picking** them'

'water-lilies which opened up and were left (in the field) without being picked by the woman wearing bangles'

kuḷici vāṇ **kēḷ** irum puṭai **kaḷāatu** ēṛri c cānta viṛakiṇ uvitta puṇkam (pura.168:9-11)

[**kaḷu** 'to wash'; **kaḷāatu** < **kaḷu** + **āt** + **u**]

'the meal which was cooked with sandalwood as firewood in a big pot whose dark sides were **not washed**'

puṇai **perātu** aru nilai nīriṇ aval tuyar (pari.21:42-43)

[**peru** 'to get, obtain'; **perātu** < **peru** + **āt** + **u**]

'her distress in the dangerous water, **because she does not** hold on (to the bamboo)'

koḷuṅkurai kuy iṭutōrum **ānātu** ārppa (pati.21:10-11)

[**ān** 'to be content'; **ānātu** < **ān** + **āt** + **u**]

'as the fat bits (of flesh) make noise **endlessly** whenever the seasoning is put/added'

(bare stem + glide + āt + u)

pārai neṭuṇ cuṇai viḷainta tēral **aṛiyātu** uṇṭa kaṭuvan (aka.2:4-5)

[**aṛi** 'to know, realize'; **aṛiyātu** < **aṛi** + glide **y** + **āt** + **u**]

'the male monkey which drank **without knowing** the nectar that fermented in the large pool among the rocks'

(non-past/non-completive stem in **kk + al + āt + u**)

karanta kāmam kai n **niṛukkallātu** nayantu nām viṭṭa naṇmoḷi  
(aka.198:2-3)

[**niṛu** ‘to make stay, check, hold’;

**niṛukkallātu** < **niṛukk + al + āt + u**]

‘good words which we expressed willingly **without being able to hold** the passion which (we) had concealed (earlier)’

(non-past/non-completive stem in **k + al + āt + u**)

nīṛ koṇṭu vicumpu **ivarkallātu** ... kuṇṇam nōkki p perum kali vāṇam  
ērtarum poḷutu (kuru.287:5-6, 7-8)

[**ivar** ‘to crawl up’; **ivarkallātu** < **ivark + al + āt + u**]

‘the time when the big roaring clouds take in water and rise up toward the hills, **without crawling up the sky**’

**ātē:**

(bare stem + **āt + ē**)

emmaiyum aṇṇu aṇa c **cūlātē** āṇṇitai nummoṭu tunṇam tunaiyāka  
nāṭiṇ atu allatu iṇṇamum uṇṇō emakku (kali.6:8-11)

[**cūl** ‘to consult, plot, plan’; **cūlātē** < **cūl + āt + ē**]

‘Is there any other pleasure for us (hon.) if you would seek us (hon.) as your companion during (times of) distress in the (forest) way, **without making plans** that might sever (our) fondness?’

**ā(a)mal:**

(bare stem + **ā + mal**)

eṇṇai nalitariṇ iv ūṛ p pali nī **perāamal** koḷvēṇ (kali.65:17-18)

[**peru** ‘to get, obtain’; **perāamal** < **peru + ā + mal**]

‘If (you) hurt me, I will take this town’s offering **without** you getting it.’



num iyam toypaṭāmal (malai:365)  
 [toypaṭu 'to sag' < toy + paṭu; toypaṭāmal < toypaṭu + ā + mai]  
 'without your musical instruments sagging'

**ā(a)mai:**

(bare stem + ā + mai)

tol iyal vaḷāamai t tuṇai eṇa p puṇarntavaḷ (kali.2:17)  
 [vaḷu 'to swerve, slip'; vaḷāamai < vaḷu + ā + mai]  
 'the woman who united (with you) without swerving from the age  
 old tradition'

(bare stem + glide + ā + mai)

pala paṇṭam varampu aṛiyāmai vantu iṇṭi (paṭṭ:131-132)  
 [aṛi 'to know'; aṛiyāmai < aṛi + glide y + ā + mai]  
 'many things come and pile up without (anyone) knowing the limit'

**i:**

(stem il + i)

kuppai vēlai uppu ili ventatai ... micaiyum aḷi paci varuttam (cīru:137, 139-140)  
 [il 'to be absent, not to exist'; ili < il + i]<sup>2</sup>  
 'the grief of destructive hunger (that accepts) eating wild greens  
 cooked without salt'  
 'the misery of hunger (that accepts) eating wild greens cooked  
 without salt'

---

<sup>2</sup> The form **ili** could be construed as a negative participial noun (like **illātatai**), meaning 'that which does not have ...'

(past/completive stem of **al/il + i**)

kāṇal āṭiyatu **anri** k karantu nām ceytatu onru illai (narr.27:4-5)

[**al** 'not to be X'; **anri** < **anr** + **i**]

'**Except** for playing in the shore, there was nothing that we did hiding.'

maṇam kavalpu **inri** ... eḷuntu

(poru:95)

[**il** 'to be absent'; **inri** < **inr** + **i**]

'waking up **without** worries in mind'

**u:**

(past/completive stem of **il + u**)

maṇappu **inru** iruṅkōḷ īrā p pūṭkai k karumpañūraṇ (pura.381:24-26)

[**il** 'to be absent'; **inru** < **inr** + **u**]

'Karumpañūraṇ with a precept that is **without** forgetfulness and undisturbed from its great goal'

## THE INFINITIVE

**GENERAL:** For more general information, see “A Note on Participles” and “Adverbs” for the use of the infinitives as adverbs. The infinitive translates as ‘to verb.’ The “verb” is the verb from which the infinitive is derived. The action/state indicated by the infinitive co-occurs, precedes, or follows its successive/completing action/state; when they do not co-occur, the action/state of the infinitive is the result or the purpose of the succeeding/completing action/state and vice versa.

**FORMATION:** The infinitive is derived by suffixation. Certain infinitive suffixes are added directly to a bare stem, while some are added to the non-past/non-completive stem ending with (k)k, t, or (p)p.

No person-number-gender distinction is made by the infinitive suffix. There are no discrete negative infinitive suffixes; see “The Negative Infinitive.” For information on the non-past/non-completive stem, see “The Non-Past Stem.”

The infinitive suffixes are **a**, **ar**, **ā**, **iya**, **iyar**, **ūu**, **pān**, **pu**, **mār**, and **vān**. Among these, **a** is added to a bare stem or a non-past stem ending with **(k)k**, **t**, or **(p)p**, while the others are added only to the bare stem.<sup>1</sup>

The following table indicates the function of the infinitive suffixes in terms of the sequence of actions. The three columns represent the three sequences in which the action of the infinitive can happen in relation to its completing action. The rows represent the suffixes which mark the infinitives. The first row, for example, tells us that the action of the infinitive marked by the suffix **a** can precede, follow, or occur simultaneously with its completing action.

	precedes	follows	co-occurs (simultaneous)
suffix	<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>
	—	<b>ar</b>	—
	—	—	<b>ā</b>
	—	<b>iya</b>	—
	—	<b>iyar</b>	—
	—	—	<b>ūu</b>
	—	<b>pān</b>	—
	<b>pu</b>	—	<b>pu</b>
	—	<b>mār</b>	—
	—	<b>vān</b>	—

<sup>1</sup> In fact, **pān** and **vān** are the combinations of the non-past/non-completive markers **p** and **v** and the affix **ān** which provides a causal sense. Similarly, **pu** is the combination of the non-past/non-completive marker **p** and **u**. See “Case Markers and Postpositions” and “The Causal” for the usage of **ān** as a case marker and a causal suffix. Traditional grammars treat **pān** and **vān** as infinitive suffixes. This study also has presented them as “infinitive suffixes” so that readers familiar with traditional grammars would be able to recognize them.

## EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: suffixation

bare stem or non-past/non-completive stem + suffix

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**a:**

(bare stem + a)

viṛaliyar niṇ puṛam **cuṛra** (*malai:46*)

[**cuṛru** 'to surround, encircle'; **cuṛra** < **cuṛru** + a]

'as the dancing women **surround** you(r side)'

āvum māvum ceṇru **uṇa** k kalaṅki c cēroṭu paṭṭa ciṛumaittu āyiṇum

uṇṇīr maruṅkiṇ atar pala ākum (*pura.204:7-9*)

[**uṇ** 'to eat, consume'; **uṇa** < **uṇ** + a]

'Although they are trodden and muddled up **because** cattle and other animals go and **drink** from them, these drinking water puddles have many low paths beside them.'

tirai irum paṇi p pauvam cevvitā **vara** mukantu uravu urum uṭaṇru

ārppa (*pari.7:1-2*)

[\***varu** 'to be dry, empty'; **vara** < **varu** + a]

'the powerful cloud drew (water) directly **drying up** the dark wavy cold ocean and the strong thunder roared excitedly, and ... '

(bare stem + glide + a)

pari y uṭai vayan̄ku tāḷ pantiṇ **tāva** ... mallal am cēri kal eṇa t tōṇri

ampal mūtūr alar eḷa c ceṇratu aṇrō koṇkaṇ tērē

(*narr.249:7, 9-11*)

[**tā** 'to leap'; **tāva** < **tā** + glide **v** + **a**]

'The **Koṇkaṇ**'s chariot arrived making a big noise in (our) fertile beautiful residential area and left, as the feet of his horses **leapt** like balls, because gossip arose (about our relationship) in (our) good old rumor-stricken town; did it not?'

acumpil paṭu ... kaḷirriṇ varuttam **coliya** p piṭi paṭi muṛukkiya peru  
mara p pūcal (aka.8:9-11)

[**coli** 'to remove, peel off'; **coliya** < **coli** + glide **y** + **a**]

'the big commotion which arose when the female elephant twisted a large tree (for using it) as a step **for removing** the distress of the male elephant which fell into a ditch'

(non-past/non-completive stem in **(k)k** + **a**)

arcira k kālai ullār kātalar āyiṇ olḷilāi ciṛappoṭu viḷaṅkiya kātci **marakka**  
viṭumō niṇ māmai k kaviṇē (aiṅk.470:2-5)

[**marā** 'to forget'; **marakka** < **marakk** + **a**]

'If your lover does not remember you (even) in the cold season, will the attractive beauty of your dark complexion **let** him **forget** the sight of you with bright ornaments?'

parantu icai **niṛka** p pāṭiṇaṇ (pura.126:13)

[**niḷ** 'to stay'; **niṛka** < **niṛk** + **a**]

'He sang (of you) so (your) fame spreads and stays.'

(non-past/non-completive stem in **t** + **a**)

vāṇam poḷinta nīṛ maṇ micai āṇātu vantu tokupu iṇṭi ... pōṇa nilam  
ellām pōr āṛ vayal **pukuta** (pari.22:8-9, 11)

[**puku** 'to enter'; **pukuta** < **pukut** + **a**]

‘the (rain) water, which the sky poured, collected and gathered endlessly on earth and entered hay-filled fields in all the lands it flowed, and ... ‘

(non-past/non-completive stem in (p)p + a)

piṛaṇ kaṭai marappa nalkuvaṇ celiṇē (pura.68:19)

[marā ‘to forget’; marappa < marapp + a]

‘If (you) go, he will give (you enough) so as to forget (about going and standing at) the doors of other people.’

māṇilai neṭuntēr pāṇi nirpa p pakalum nam vayiṇ akalāṇ āki p payiṇru varum (aka.50:4-6)

[nil ‘to stand, wait’; nirpa < nirp + a]

‘He was getting accustomed not to go away from our side even during the day, while his tall chariot waited around.’

ar:

(bare stem + ar)

niṇ eṇiyar ōkkiya ciṛu ceṅkuvaḷai (pati.52:21-22)

[eṇi ‘to toss’; eṇiyar < eṇi + glide y + ar]<sup>2</sup>

‘the small red water-lily which (your queen) raised to toss/chase you’

<sup>2</sup> The contexts in which the verb eṇi occurs in classical Tamil indicate that it can be interpreted to mean ‘to be thrown about; tossed’ when used with reference to human beings. But it is understood in modern Tamil to mean ‘to throw (something at someone).’ Note that the Old Commentary on pati.52:21-22 and a later interpretation of it in the twentieth century reflect these two different ways of interpreting eṇi: “tāṇ avanai eṇitarku ōkkiya ciṇiyatoru ceṅkuvaḷai” (the Old Commentary) vs. “niṇ miṭu eṇitarporuṭṭu tūkkiya ciṇiya ceṅkuvaḷai malar” (U.V. Saminathier’s commentary). See how the object of eṇi is understood to be different in each case.

(Note that **nī** 'you', in its oblique form **nin**, is the object of the verb **eri**.)

**ā(a)**<sup>3</sup>:

(bare stem + ā)

nillātu **paṭāa** c celīyar nin pakaivar mīnē (pura.24:24-25)  
 [paṭu 'to die, perish'; paṭāa < paṭu + ā]  
 'May the stars of your enemies not stay (for ever), but **perish** and be gone.'

anti vāṇamoṭu kaṭal aṇi **koḷāa** vanta mālai (aka.360:8-9)  
 [koḷ 'to acquire, accept, have; koḷāa < koḷ + ā]  
 'evening which arrived as the ocean and the evening sky **acquired** beauty'

(bare stem + glide + ā)

maram **maṛaiyā** k kaḷimiṇ (malai:210)  
 [maṛai 'to hide'; maṛaiyā < maṛai + glide y + ā]  
 'pass through as you **hide among the trees**'

**(ī)iya**:

(bare stem + iya)

neñcam ... avar taḷar aṭi **tāṅkiya** cenṇratu inṇē (aka.128:6, 14-15)

<sup>3</sup> In one context, **kulāa val vil** 'bent cruel bow' (aka.265:17), the word **kulāa** appears to be an adjectival participle because it is completed by the nominal **vil** 'bow.' However, it can be interpreted as an infinitive derived from **kula** 'to be bent, not straight' and modifying **val** 'strong', which does function as a verb in classical Tamil. See "A Note on the Verb ā" for a discussion of ā as a suffix. Also note that Zvelebil (1967:28) treats this ā as an adverbial participle suffix.



[**tāṅku** ‘to hold, bear’; **tāṅkiya** < **tāṅku** + **iya**]

‘My heart left (me) **for holding** his staggering steps (through the dangerous mountain path).’

cēval ēṇal kāppōr **uṇarttiya** kūum kāṇattōr niṇ tevvar (*pura.28:8-10*)  
[**uṇarttu** ‘make realize, make understand, inform’;

**uṇarttiya** < **uṇarttu** + **iya**]

‘Your enemies are in the forest where the rooster crows **to inform/alert** the guards of the millet field.’

eṛi nīr vaiyakam **veliīya** celvōy

(*mull.57*)

[**vel** ‘to conquer, defeat’; **veliīya** < **vel** + **iya**]

‘O you, who are proceeding **to conquer** the world surrounded by the tossing waters.’

(non-past/non-completive stem in **kk** + **iya**)

vev veṇ kaluḷi tavveṇa k **kuṭikkiya** yāṅku vallunaḷ kol (*kurū.356:4-5*)

[**kuṭi** ‘to drink’; **kuṭikkiya** < **kuṭikk** + **iya**]

‘How will she be able **to drink** the hot frothy water with a slurp (that sounds like) “tav”?’

(The form **kuṭikkiya** seems to reflect an attempt to add **iya** to the infinitive stem ending with **kk**. It might reflect an attempt to indicate the “palatalized” nature of the infinitive suffix **a**. The palatalization is due to the **i** preceding **kk**, and is represented by **iy** following **kk**. Thus, we have **kuṭikkiya** instead of the normal **kuṭikka**.)

(**i**)**iyar**:

(bare stem + **iyar**)

kaṭavul **pēṇiyar** koṇṭa tī

(*pati.21:5-6*)

[**pēṇ** 'to worship'; **pēṇiyar** < **pēṇ** + **iyar**]

'the fire which (you) tended **in order to worship** the gods'

cīru tiṇai p paṭu kiḷi **kaṭṭiyar** ... kuḷir koḷ taṭṭai ... puṭaiyā ... niṇra nī  
(*aka.32:5-7*)

[**kaṭi** 'to chase away'; **kaṭṭiyar** < **kaṭi** + **iyar**]

'you who stood (in the millet field) beating (the tools such as) kuḷir and taṭṭai **in order to chase away** the parrots which came down on the small millets'

**ūu**<sup>4</sup>:

(bare stem + **ūu**)

mālai tunṇutal **kāṇūu** ... muṇkai paṇṇi ... nāṭu aṇi naṇ maṇam ayarkam  
... eṇa ... kūri ... peyarntaṇaṇ (*kuri:230-232, 233, 234, 237*)

[**kāṇ** 'to see, look at'; **kāṇūu** < **kāṇ** + **ūu**]

'Seeing that the evening is approaching, he took (my) hands and said, "We will celebrate our wedding which the whole country will know" and left.'

(bare stem + glide + **ūu**)

aimpāl cīru puṇam putaiya vāri k kural **pīliyūu** neṇi keṭa vilāṅkiya  
nīyir (*aka.8:15-17*)

[**pīli** 'to wring'; **pīliyūu** < **pīli** + glide **y** + **ūu**]

'You who crossed over the paths that perished, **while wringing** your five-parted (wet) hair that is combed covering your small nape.'

<sup>4</sup> This suffix always occurs as an elongated vowel regardless of the shape of the stem to which it is added. Note that Zvelebil (1967:28) treats it as an adverbial participle suffix.

**pān (p + ān):**(bare stem + **pān**)

nam valai p paṭṭatōr puttiyāṇai vantatu **kānpān** yān taṅkiṇēn  
 (kali.97:6-7)

[**kāṇ** ‘to see’; **kānpān** < **kāṇ** + **pān**’]

‘I stayed **in order to see** the new elephant which was caught in our net.’

**pu (p + u)<sup>5</sup>:**(bare stem + **pu**)

evaṇ **ninaipu** vāṭuti (narr.208:4)

[**ninai** ‘to think’; **ninaipu** < **ninai** + **pu**]

‘What are you **thinking about and** wilting (for)?’

talai **irupu** tāroṭu puraḷa ... uruṇṭu piḷantu nerintu **uruḷpu** **citarupu**  
 aḷaru **coripu** nilam cōra c cērār in uyir cekukkum ... nī ēntiya  
 paṭaiyē (pari.2:41, 46-47)

[**iru** ‘to be cut off’; **uruḷ** ‘to roll’; **citaru** ‘to scatter’;

**cori** ‘to pour out’]

‘The weapon you are carrying destroys the enemies’ lives as their heads, **having been cut off**, toss with their garlands, roll, open, **scatter while rolling** wobbly, and fall down to earth **while pouring out** the fat.’

<sup>5</sup> Note that Zvelebil (1967:28) treats it as an adverbial participle suffix.

**mār:**(bare stem + **mār**)viḷuppuṇ **taṇimār** kāppu eṇa ... koṭicciyar pāṭal (*malai:303-304*)[**taṇi** 'to heal, cool off'; **taṇimār** < **taṇi** + **mār**]

'songs of the hill-women (who sing) in order to heal the wounds of war'

**vān** (**v** + **ān**):(bare stem + **vān**)uḷaiyīr ākavum paṇippōḷ tamiyē **kuḷaivān** ... vāṭaiyum kaṇṭirō vantu  
niṇratu (*narr.229:8-9, 11*)[**kuḷai** 'to soften, weaken, cave in slowly'; **kuḷaivān** < **kuḷai** + **vān**]

'Did you see? The cold (wind) has arrived and lingers so that the woman, who shivers/trembles even when you are close by, grows weak.'

avaḷai k kai p piṇai **niḱkuvān** pāyvāl ... kaṇ oḷi (*pari.7:57, 58*)[**niḱku** 'to make ... go away; remove'; **niḱkuvān** < **niḱku** + **vān**]

'the brightness of the eyes of the woman who jumped into the (Vaiyai) flood in order to remove her (i.e., the other woman's) hold (of her lover)'

## THE NEGATIVE INFINITIVE

**GENERAL:** See “A Note on Participles,” “The Infinitive,” and “The Negative **al** and **il**.”

**FORMATION:** A periphrasis expresses the notion of what is here referred to as the “negative infinitive.” That is, when the negative adverbial participle of a verb is followed by an affirmative infinitive form of the verb **iru** ‘to continue to be, remain in a certain state’, it takes on the meaning ‘without doing ... .’ Such combination tells us that the action indicated by the verb underlying the adverbial participle did not happen/materialize and that the negative situation continues.

No person-number-gender distinction is made by the negative infinitive.

## EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: periphrasis

negative adverbial participle + infinitive of *iru*

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**kka:**

(negative adverbial participle + **irukka**)

**tonrātu irukkavum** vallan ... **tōṇravum** vallan (pura.315:5, 7)

[**tōṇru** 'to be visible, appear';

**tōṇrātu iru** 'to remain without being visible']

'He is capable of remaining **without being visible**. He is also capable of being visible.'

**ppa:**

(negative adverbial participle + **iruppa**)

puraviṇ cenkāl cēval inṇuṇṇu peṭaiyoṭu maṇṇu tērntu **uṇṇātu iravum**  
pakalum mayaṅki k kaiyaṇṇu ... **iruppa** (neṭu:45-47, 48)

[**uṇ** 'to eat'; **uṇṇātu iru** 'to remain without eating']

'as the red-legged male dove remains reluctantly, being confused about the day and the night, **without** choosing to eat at the courtyard together with its loving female'

## THE CONDITIONAL

**GENERAL:** See "A Note on Participles." The conditional translates as 'if X verb(s/ed/en).' The action/state indicated by the conditional precedes and is a condition for its succeeding/completing action/state.

**FORMATION:** The affirmative conditional is derived by suffixation.

- (i) **in/il** is added to a bare stem or a non-past/non-completive stem ending with **(k)k** or **(p)p**;
- (ii) **āl** is added to a past/completive stem or to a conditional form ending with **in**;
- (iii) **ēl** is added to a past/completive stem or an affirmative finite verb.

Neither a person-number-gender distinction nor a distinction between affirmation and negation is made by the conditional suffix. See "The Non-Past Stem," "The Past Stem," and the sections on personal verbs and adjectival nouns for information on the non-past stem, past stem, finite

verbs, and adjectival nouns. See “The Negative Conditional” for information on the negative type.

### EXAMPLES

#### Formation mechanism: suffixation

bare stem + **in**  
 past/completive stem + **āl**  
 conditional form in **in** + **āl**  
 non-past/non-completive stem ending with (k)k  
 or (p)p + **in/il**  
 past/completive stem + **ēl**  
 affirmative finite verb + **ēl**

#### *Suffix      Structure and Example*

**āl:**

(past/completive stem + **āl**)

nāṭaṇ **kaṇṭāl** koṇṭu maṇai tiruntu aṭi vāḷtti (*pura.390:24-25*)

[**kāṇ** ‘to see’; **kaṇṭāl** < **kaṇṭ** + **āl**]

‘taking the Nāṭaṇ to (one’s) house **if** (one) **sees** him and praising his perfect feet’

kaḷaṅkiṇāṇ aṛikuvatu **enrāl** naṇṛāl amma niṇṛa ivaḷ nalaṇē

(*aiṅk.248:2-4*)

[**en** ‘to say/be’; **enrāl** ‘if it is the case’ < **enr** + **āl**]

‘If only it is / could be understood by the marbles (of the priest), her wellbeing that has stayed (with her so far) is a good one indeed.’



(conditional in **in** + **āl**)

āyar emar ānāl āyttiyēm yām mika (kali.108:9)

[ā ‘to be’; ānāl < \*āyināl < āyin + āl < ā + glide y + in + āl]

‘If our kin are cowherds, we are cowherdesses.’

(This is the only occurrence of ānāl in the caṅkam anthologies. See “A Note on the Verb ān” for information on the contraction of (y)in to n in similar forms. Also note that this derivation of adding āl to a form which is already a conditional ending with in, holds all the way down to modern Tamil class 3 verbs: e.g., pēcināl ‘if X speaks’ < pēcu ‘to speak’ + in + āl. Normally, scholars would derive modern Tamil pēcināl from the “past stem” pēcin + āl. )

**il:**

(non-past/non-completive stem in **kk** + **il**)

iṇitu uṭaṇ kalikkil ilamai iṇitāl amma iṇi avar p puṇarvē

(aīnk.415:3-4)

[kalī ‘to pass (time), spend’; kalikkil < kalikk + il]

‘Uniting with him now would be sweet indeed, if only (I) spend (my) youth with (him) happily.’

**in:**

(bare stem + **in**)

kāṇamum iṇiyavām nummoṭu varinē

(kuru.388:7)

[var ‘to come’; varin < var + in]

‘Even the forest would be pleasant if (I) come with you.’

aṇṇai tuñcin tuñcā k kaṇṇar kāvalar kaṭukuvar

(aka.122:5-6)

[tuñcu ‘to sleep’; tuñcin < tuñcu + in]

‘If/when mother sleeps, the guards, with sleepless eyes, would rush (to keep watch).’

taṇ am tuṛaivaṇ **kāṇiṇ** muṇ niṇṛu kaṭiya kaḷaral ōmpumati

(*kurū.296:5-6*)

[**kāṇ** 'to see'; **kāṇiṇ** < **kāṇ** + **iṇ**]

'If you see the man from the cool fresh waterfront, refrain from chiding harshly.'

pāmpu mataṇ aḷiyum pāṇāḷ kaṅkulum ariya alla maṇ ... avar nāṭṭu eṇ arum piṛaṅkal ...

nīyir i-c-curam aṛitalum aṛitirō eṇṇunar p **perinē**

(*aka.8:4-5, 12-13, 17-18*)

[**peru** 'to get, obtain, have'; **perin** < **peru** + **iṇ**]

'The unthinkable mountain range in his country is not difficult (to pass through) if (only) we get/find (considerate) people who would ask "Do you really know this forest?" '

cēṇi cēvaṭi cērttiṇ eṇ eṇappaṭumō eṇṛalum uṇṭē (*narr.342:9-10*)

[**cērrtu** 'to make join'; **cērttiṇ** < **cērttu** + **iṇ**]

'If I make my head join (her) red feet, is it likely that (she) would ask "What is it?" '

'If I fall at her decorated feet, would she care to ask me "What is it?" '

(non-past/non-completive stem in (k)k + **iṇ**)

ceṇi cevi eruvai aṇcuvara ikukkum kal atar k kavalai **pōkin** ... arum  
tuyar tarum iṇaḷ paṇi vār kaṇṇē (*aka.77:11-12, 19*)

[**pō** 'to go'; **pōkin** < **pōk** + **iṇ**]

'If I go in the stony forked path where the vultures with red ears moan frightfully, (the memory of) her eyes shedding tears would give unbearable grief.'

niṇ maṇaiyōḷ **kēṭkin** varuntuvaḷ peritē (aīnk.81:4-5)  
 [kēḷ ‘to hear about’; **kēṭkin** < **kēṭk** + **in**]  
 ‘If your wife **hears** (about it) she will feel greatly sad.’

(non-past/non-completive stem in (p)p + **in**)

ūraṇoṭu **iruppin** iru maruṇkiṇamē (kuru.370:2-3)  
 [iru ‘to remain, stay, sit’; **iruppin** < **irupp** + **in**]  
 ‘We are two sides/bodies, **if/when I sit up** with the Ūraṇ.’

puraivatu **ninaippin** puraivatō iṇrē (pati.17:1)  
 [niṇai ‘to think’; **ninaippin** < **ninaipp** + **in**]  
 ‘**If one thinks** of (something) that measures up (to you), there is nothing that measures up (to you).’

ceṇitoṭi urra cellalum piṇitu eṇa k kāṇ keḷu nāṭaṇ **kēṭpin** yāṇ uyir  
 vāḷtal ataṇiṇum aritē (aka.98:28-30)  
 [kēḷ ‘to hear about’; **kēṭpin** < **kēṭpin**]  
 ‘**If the man from the forest-filled country hears** that the (love)sickness, which the woman wearing many bangles has, is (due to) something else, it will be even more difficult for me to live.’

(bare stem + glide + **in**)

poḷutu iṭai **teriyin** poyyē kāmam (kuru.32:3)  
 [teri ‘to reveal itself, surface’; **teriyin** < **teri** + glide **y** + **in**]  
 ‘Passion is false, **if lapse of time is visible/noticeable**.’

num kō yār eṇa **vinavin** em kō ... neṭuñcēralāṭaṇ (pati.20:1, 5)  
 [viṇa ‘to enquire’; **vinavin** < **viṇa** + glide **v** + **in**]  
 ‘**If you would ask** who our king is, (I would say that) our king is Neṭuñcēralāṭaṇ.’

**ēl:**

(past/completive stem + ēl)

a-k-kaviṇ tīrāmal kāppatōr tiraṇ **uṇṭēl** uraittai k kāṇ (*kali.38:12-13*)

[u] ‘to exist’; **uṇṭēl** < **uṇṭ** + **ēl**]

‘Tell me, if there is a way to protect that fascinating beauty from being worn out.’

‘Tell me, if there is a way to protect that fascinating beauty from disappearing.’

(finite verb + ēl)

ceṇṇī nī cellā **viṭuvāyēl** ... muṭṭuppāṭu ākalum uṇṭu<sup>1</sup> (*kali.93:33-36*)

[**viṭu** ‘to let go, allow, give up’;

**viṭuvāyēl** < **viṭuvāy** ‘you will allow (yourself)’ + **ēl**]

‘Please go. If you allow yourself not to go (to your other women), there will even be an obstacle.’

---

<sup>1</sup> Actually, this could be treated as an example of a negative conditional, the sense of which is obtained periphrastically by following an adverbial participle in ā (*cellā*) with a conditional in ēl (*viṭuvāyēl*). One modern commentator notes that *cellā viṭuvāyēl* is “one word” : cf. P.V. Somasundaranar’s explanation of *kali.93:33*.

Note that the modern Tamil negative conditional does contain the component *āviṭṭāl* which is nothing but an old verbal participle ending with ā + *viṭṭāl*: e.g., *nī atai c ceyyāviṭṭāl* ‘if you don’t do it.’ In this example, the form *ceyyā* is, in fact, an old adverbial participle ending with ā, whereas *viṭṭāl* is the conditional of *viṭu* ‘to let go.’

ellā nī uṛṛatu evaṇō ... **enrīrēl** eṇ citai ceytāṇ ivan eṇa uṛṛatu itu  
 eṇa ... uraikkum uraṇ akattu uṇṭāyiṇ ... pacakkuva ... eṇ kaṇ  
 (kali.142:19-23)

[**eṇ** 'to say, ask, enquire'; **enrīrēl** < **enrīr** 'you said' + **ēl**]

'If you ask me "What is it that you have?," the strength will emerge in me and I will tell you that he did (something to) destroy (me) and that this is what happened. And my eyes will become pale.'

## THE NEGATIVE CONDITIONAL

**GENERAL:** See “A Note on Participles,” “The Conditional,” and “The Negative *al* and *il*.” The negative conditional translates as ‘if X do/does not do verb.’ That is, when the conditional is negative, it signifies the absence or “non-happening” of the action/state indicated by the verb from which it is derived.

**FORMATION:** The negative conditional is expressed by suffixing *ēl* to a negative finite verb.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> An adverbial participle in *ā* could also be followed by a positive conditional in *ēl* to provide the sense of a negative conditional *ceṇṇī nī cellā viṭuvāyēl ... muṭṭuppāṭu ākalum uṇṭu* (*kali.93:33-36*), which is discussed in “The Conditional” and “A Note on the Verb *ā*.”

## EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: suffixation

negative finite verb + ēl

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**ēl:**

(negative finite verb + ēl)

ñāyirē eṇ kēlvaṇ yāṅkuḷaṇ āyiṇuṁ kātṭimō **kātṭāyēl** vāṇattu evaṇ  
ceyti nī (kali.147:27-29)

[**kātṭu** ‘to make see, show’;

**kātṭāyēl** < **kātṭāy** ‘you will not show’ + ēl]

‘O sun, show me, please, where my husband is. **If you do not show**, what do you do in the sky?’

vaḷaṅkā p poḷutu nī kaṇṇu mēyppāy pōl vaḷaṅkal aṇivār **uraiyārēl**  
emmai ikaḷntārē ... emar (kali.112:12-14)

[urai ‘to tell’; **uraiyārēl** < **uraiyār** ‘they will not tell’ + ēl]

‘If my kin **do not tell** me about your wandering on the pretext of tending the calves at a time when no one moves around, they have certainly ignored me.’

pūṇ vanta vaḷi nīṇ pāl māya k kaḷavu **anrēl** tantānai t tantē tarukku  
(pari.20:76-78)

[al ‘not to be ...’; **anrēl** < **anru** ‘it is not’ + ēl]

‘If (it is true that) the way in which (this) jewelry came to you is **not** an illusive theft, then bring me the man who brought it to you and be proud.’

## THE CAUSAL

("since, because of")

**GENERAL:** See "A Note on Participles" for more general information on the causal. The causal translates as 'since X verb(s/ed/en)' where the "verb" is the verb from which the causal is derived. The action/state indicated by the causal precedes and is a cause for its completing action/state.

**FORMATION:** The causal form of a verb is derived by suffixation: ān or in is added to a verbal noun ending with al, āl, kal, tal, or mai.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the word ataṇāl 'because of that; therefore' also provides a causal sense.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> See "Case Markers and Postpositions" for more examples and other uses of ān and in.

<sup>2</sup> ataṇāl < atan (oblique of atu 'that one') + āl (suffix): e.g., naṇṇar naṇmoḷi kēṭṭaṇam ataṇāl ... varutal talaivar vāyvatu 'We heard lovely and good words (of omen). **Because of that / Therefore**, the arrival of the Chief (your man) will definitely happen' (*mull*:17, 20).



No person-number-gender distinction is made by the causal. The difference between affirmation and negation is not made by the causal suffix, but by the verbal noun to which the causal suffix is appended.

### EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: verbal noun in **al/āl/kal/tal/mai + ān/in**

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**ān:**

(verbal noun in **al + ān**)

kollai kural vānki īnā malai vālnar alla purintu **olūkalān** (*kali.39:13-14*)  
**[olū(ku)** ‘to conduct oneself, behave’; **olūkal** ‘behavior’]  
 ‘With their sheaves bent, the (millet) fields will not yield, **since** the people living on the mountain **conduct themselves** by doing things that are not good.’

(verbal noun in **mai + glide + ān**)

uṇṭāl amma iv-ulakam ... piṛarkku eṇa muyalunar **uṇmaiānē**  
*(puṛa.182:1, 9)*

**[u]** ‘to be, to exist’; **uṇmai** ‘existence’;

**uṇmaiān** < **uṇmai** + glide y + **ān**

‘This world exists **because there are** people who make efforts for the sake of others.’

**in:**

(verbal noun in **al + in**)

peruṅkai ēṛṛai ... vaḷ ukir **katuvalin** pāmpu matan aliyum pāṇāl  
 kaṅkul *(aka.8:2,3-4)*

[**katu** ‘to clutch’; **katuval** ‘clutching, grabbing’]  
 ‘midnight when the strength of the snake (inside the anthill) perishes  
 because the sharp claws of the boar with big hands are **clutching**  
 it’

ceypa ellām ceytaṇaṇ **ākalin** ituka oṇṇō cuṭuka oṇṇō (*pura.239:19-20*)  
 [**āku** ‘to become’; **ākal** ‘coming into being’]  
 ‘He did all he could (in this life). **Therefore**, bury him or cremate  
 him. (It does not really matter).’

(verbal noun in **āl + in**)

pōr etir vēntar tār alintu **orālin** ... perun tuṇai t tatainta kāñci  
*(pati.23:17, 19)*  
 [**oru** ‘to move away, depart from’; **orāl** ‘moving away’]  
 ‘the kāñci trees which were disfigured because the kings who  
 faced you in the war **retreated** (through the fields) with their front-line  
 army destroyed’

(verbal noun in **tal + in**)

kalam cey kōvē ... neṭumāvaḷavaṇ tēvar ulakam eytiṇaṇ **ātalīn**  
 aṇṇōṇ kavikkum kaṇ akaṇ tāli vaṇaital vēṭṭaṇai āyiṇ eṇaiyatūm  
 iru nilam tikiriya p peru malai maṇṇā vaṇaital ollumō niṇakkē  
*(pura.228:1, 10-15)*

[**ā** ‘to be’; **ātal** ‘coming into being’;  
**ātalīn** has an overall sense ‘since (it is the case)’]  
 ‘Neṭumāvaḷavaṇ reached the world of the gods. **Therefore**, O potter,  
 if you wish to make so large a pot that would cover him, would it be  
 possible for you somehow to make it with the vast earth as your  
 wheel and the big mountains as clay?’

alal pōl venkatir paitara t **terutalin** nilal tēyntu ulaṛiya maratta ...  
kāṭu (aka.1:10-11, 15)

[**teru** 'to scorch'; **terutal** 'scorching']

'The jungles have dried-up trees whose shade has narrowed **because** the fiery hot rays (of the sun) **are scorching.**'

(verbal noun in **mai** + glide + **in**)

**vaḷamaiyin** taṇṇilai tīrntaṇṇum ilaṇē (kuri:244-245)

[**vaḷa** 'to be bounteous, rich'; **vaḷamai** 'bounty']

'Neither has he swerved from his state **because of** his **richness.**'

talai p **pōkaṇmai**yiṇ ciṛu vaḷi maṭaṅki nilai peṛu naṭukal ākiya k  
kaṇṇum (pura.223:2-3)

[**talai** 'end, edge'; **pō** 'to go'; **pōkaṇmai** 'not going';

**talaippō(ku)** 'dying'; **pōkaṇmai**yiṇ < **pōkaṇmai** + glide y + **in**]

'even when he turned into an everlasting hero-stone, folding himself down in a small place, **since it** (i.e., his action) **was not** (meant to be) **going to the end/edge**'

(Note that the sense expressed is negative because of the negative verbal noun **pōkaṇmai**.)

yāvarum vaḷaṅkunar **inmai**yiṇ vauvunar maṭiya c curam pul eṇṇa  
āṛra ... kāṭu (aka.1:13-14, 15)

[**il** 'to be absent'; **inmai** 'absence']

'The jungles have paths with lifeless forests wherein the (highway) robbers are lying low / withdrawn **since there are no** passersby.'

(Note that the sense expressed is negative because of the negative verbal noun **inmai**.)

**vārāmai**in pulanta neñcamoṭu nōval (aka:25:15-16)

[**var** 'to come'; **vārāmai** 'non-coming']

'Do not suffer with a frustrated heart **since** (your lover) **has not** (yet) **come.**'

(Note that the sense expressed is negative because of the negative verbal noun **vārāmai**.)

## THE CONCESSIVE OF FACT

("although, eventhough ... ")

**GENERAL:** See "A Note on Participles." The concessive of fact can be translated as 'even though X verb(s/ed/en).' It provides a sense of actual occurrence/materializing of the action/state indicated by the verb from which it is derived. The action/state indicated by the concessive fact precedes and results in its succeeding/completing action/state.

**FORMATION:** The concessive of fact is derived by suffixation.

- (i) **ānum** is added to a verb stem that functions as the predicate<sup>1</sup>;
- (ii) **um** is added to an adverbial participle, conditional ending with **in**, or an infinitive ending with **a**.

---

<sup>1</sup> **ānum** is a contracted form of **āyinum**. Therefore, it is also of the structure conditional in **in** + **um**. See "A Note on the Verb **ān**" for an explanation of similar forms in which (y)**in** is reduced to **n**.

The affirmation-negation distinction is not made by **ānum** or **um** but by the stem to which they are added. No person-number-gender distinction is made by the concessive of fact.

### EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: suffixation

predicate + **ānum**  
 adverbial participle + **um**  
 conditional in **in** + **um**  
 infinitive in **a** + **um**

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**ānum** (**āyin** + **um**):

(predicate + **ānum**)

nin tavaru illānum kaḷainar il nōy ceyyum kavin aṛintu ... pōttanta  
 numar tavaru il eṇpāy (kali.58:8-10)

[il 'to be non-existent']

'Although it is not your fault, do/can you say that it is not the fault of your kin who let you go (out in the street) knowing (about) your abundant/attractive beauty which creates (love)sickness that does not have a cure?'

**um**:

(adverbial participle ± glide + **um**)

irum kiḷai c ciṛār k kāṇṭum **kaṇṭum** marṛum marṛum viṇavutum ...  
 paci p piṇi maruttuvaṇ illam aṇittō cēyttō kūṛumin emakkē (pura.173:9-12)

[kāṇ 'to see'; **kaṇṭum** < **kaṇṭu** + **um**]

'We see the large group of children (coming from his residence

carrying rice). **Although** we see them, we ask again and again  
 “Tell us whether the house of the healer of hunger-disease is close  
 by or far away?” ’

kālam **anriyūm** maram payaṇ koṭuttalin (malai:134)  
 [al ‘not to be ... ‘; **anriyūm** < **anri** + glide y + **um**]  
 ‘**Although** it is **not** the right season, the trees yield fruits, and  
 therefore ...’

(conditional in **in** + **um**)

cēralātaṇ ... māntai muṛṛattu ... tuṛanta nitiyattu aṇṇa oru nāl oru  
 pakal peṛiṇum vaḷināl taṅkalar vāḷi tōḷi ... moḷi peyar tēttar  
 āyiṇum ... kātalar ceṇṇa nāṭṭē (aka.127:3, 6, 10-12, 17, 18)  
 [ā ‘to be’; **āyiṇum** < **āyin** + **um**]  
 ‘**Although** he is in a place with a different language, your lover will  
 not stay for another day in the country he is gone to even if he gets  
 one day the wealth like what Cēralātaṇ left in the courtyard of (his  
 capital) Māntai.’

arum curam tuṇintu piṛaḷ āyiṇaḷ āyiṇum ... taṇ māṛpu tuṇai āka t  
 tuyiṛruka (aka.35:10, 11, 12-13)  
 [ā ‘to be’; **āyiṇum** < **āyin** + **um**]  
 ‘She (my daughter) has become a different person. **Although** she  
**has** (become different), may he (the lover) make her sleep with his  
 chest as support.’

uḷaiyiṇ pōkātu aḷippinūm ciṛiya ñekiḷnta kaviṇ nalam kollō ... ivaḷ  
 kaṇ pacantatuvē (narr.35:9-10, 12)  
 [aḷi ‘to be compassionate’; **aḷippinūm** < **aḷippin** + **um**]  
 ‘**Although** I am **kind** (to her) without going away from her side,

her eyes turned pale. Is it (to be called) the loveliness of her beauty due to my moving/turning aside a little?’

melliya iṇiya mēvaru takuna ivai moliyām eṇa c **collinum** avai nī  
marattiyō vāli eṇ neñcē cērppanai k kaṇṭa pinṇē  
(*kuru.306:1-3, 6*)

[**col** ‘to reveal, tell’; **collinum** < **collin** + **um**]

‘O my heart, **although** I told (you) that we would not say things that are soft, sweet, and desirable, do you forget them once you see the Cērppan (my lover)?’

(infinitive in **a** + glide + **um**)

nālum nāl uṭaṇ **kalavavum** tōlē tol nilai valīiya niṇ toṭi  
(*narr.332:3-4*)

[**kala** ‘to mingle, mix’; **kalavavum** < **kalava** + glide **v** + **um**]

‘**Although** your shoulders **mingle with** your lover’s shoulders every day, your bracelets slipped from their original place.’

kāṇaka nāṭaṇ **varavum** ... mēṇi pacappatu evaṇ kol aṇṇāy  
(*aiṅk.217:3-4*)

[**var** ‘to come’; **varavum** < **vara** + glide **v** + **um**]

‘**Although** the man from the forest country **has come**, why is your body turning pale now, my friend?’

oṇṭoṭi ulaiyam **ākavum** iṇaivōḷ piḷaiyalaḷ mātō piritum nām eṇiṇē  
(*aka.5:26-28*)

[**āku** ‘to become’; **ākavum** < **āka** + glide **v** + **um**]

‘**Although I am** with her, she is (sad) like this. She will not survive if I leave her.’



## THE CONCESSIVE OF SUPPOSITION

("even if ... ")

**GENERAL:** See "A Note on Participles." The concessive of supposition can be translated as 'even if X verb(s/ed/en).' It provides a sense of an assumed occurrence of the action/state indicated by the underlying verb. The action/state indicated by the concessive of supposition precedes and results in its succeeding/completing action/state.

**FORMATION:** The concessive of supposition is derived by suffixation. The suffix **um** is added to a conditional in **āl** or **in**.<sup>1</sup>

A distinction between affirmation and negation is not made by **um**, but by the negative stem to which they are added. Also the main verb in

---

<sup>1</sup> These forms are structurally similar to some of the concessives of fact. In some contexts, even their significations might seem to overlap.

The concessive of supposition is also used to express probability and/or possibility, when it is followed by the same verb in a future finite form or imperative/optative form. Examples are given below. For a similar use of the concessive in modern Tamil, see Schiffman:82-83.

the sentence can be affirmative or negative. No person-number-gender distinction is made by the concessive of supposition.

### EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: conditional in āl or in + um

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**um**:

(conditional in āl + um)

veñ cuḷi p paṭṭa makaṟku k karai niṇṇār añcal **enrālum** uyirppu  
uṇṭām (kali.140:25-26)

[en 'to say'; **enrālum** < enrāl + um]

'For the man who is caught in a terrible whirlpool, there will be relief even if the people who are on the shore say "Do not be afraid." '

(conditional in in + um)

koṇ perum kāṇam nacci c cenṇa iravalar c cuṭṭi t toṭuttu uṇa k  
**kiṭappinūm kiṭakkum** (pura.156:2-3)

[kiṭa 'to lie still; **kiṭappinūm** < kiṭappin + um]

'The big mountain of Koṇkāṇam will probably be (there) lying still, looking forward to the suppliants so that they could surround it and enjoy/eat (its bounty).'

(Note that the concessive **kiṭappinūm** is followed by the future form **kiṭakkum**.)

yāṇṭu pala kaliya ... paḷakiya kiḷamaiyar **ākinūm** aritē tōṇṇal atarpaṭa  
oḷukal (pura.216:2-4)

[ā 'to be'; **ākinūm** < ākin + um]

‘O noble one, **even if** people **have** the claim that they have been acquainted while many years have passed by, it is difficult indeed to live accordingly.’

‘O noble one, even if people claim that they have been acquainted for many years, it is difficult, indeed, to live accordingly.’

ciṛu naṇi tamiyaḷ āyiṇum inṇuyir naṭuṅkum taṇ ilamai

(pura.247:9-10)

[ā ‘to be’; āyiṇum < āyiṇ + um]

‘the youth of the woman who would tremble for her life **even if** she is alone for a little while’

ennānum pātu eniṇ pātavum vallēṇ

(kali.140:13)

[en ‘what?’; ennānum < en āyiṇum ‘whatever it be’;

āyiṇum < āyiṇ + um]

‘Whatever the situation is, if (one) tells me “Sing,” I am capable of even singing.’

iṇ uyir kaliyiṇum uraiyal avar namakku aṇṇaiyum attanum allarō

(kuru.93:2-3)

[kali ‘to pass, leave’; kaliyiṇum < kaliyiṇ + um]

‘**Even if** your sweet life(breath) leaves you, do not speak (harsh words to him). Is he not our mother and father?’

oḷ aḷal kuṛukiṇum kuṛukuka kuṛukātu ceṇṇu nīḷiṇum nīḷka

(pura.231:2-3)

[kuṛuku ‘to grow short’; kuṛukiṇum < kuṛukiṇ + um;

nīḷ ‘to extend’; nīḷiṇum < nīḷiṇ + um]

‘Let the fire shorten (and touch the chieftain’s body). Or, let it not grow short, but extend/tower high (and not touch his body).’

(Note that the concessives **kuṛukinum** and **niḷinum** are followed respectively by the imperatives/optatives **kuṛukuka** and **niḷka**.)

**ūṭinum** iṇiya kūṛum iṇ nākai amirtu poti tuvar vāy (*pati.16:11-12*)  
 [ūṭu 'to sulk'; **ūṭinum** < **ūṭin** + **um**]  
 'her coral-like red mouth, filled with pleasant smile and nectar,  
 which speaks pleasant words **even if** she is sulking'

ceññāyirru nilavu **vēṇṭinum** vēṇṭinkaḷuḷ veyil **vēṇṭinum** vēṇṭiyatu  
 viḷaikkum āṛṛalai (*pura.38:7-9*)  
 [**vēṇṭu** 'to want, wish for'; **vēṇṭinum** < **vēṇṭin** + **um**]  
 'Even if you want the moon's rays in the red sun and if you want  
 the heat of the sun in the white moon, you are capable of growing/ef-  
 fecting what is wanted.'

nilam **peyarinum** niṇ col peyaral (*pura.3:14*)  
 [**peyar** 'to move, shake, swerve'; **peyarinum** < **peyarin** + **um**]  
 'Even if the earth shakes, you do not swerve in your words.'

## THE NON-PARTICIPLE AS A PARTICIPLE

GENERAL: See “A Note on Participles.” In some contexts, personal verbs, adjectival nouns, participial nouns, and verbal nouns function like participles in classical Tamil. In such contexts, the personal verb, the adjectival noun, and the participial noun are like the verbal participles, whereas the verbal noun gives the sense of a nominal participle.<sup>1</sup> More specifically, the past personal verb gives the sense of an adverbial participle, and the non-past personal verb that of an infinitive. The participial noun, which is not basically different from the personal verb, works like a

---

<sup>1</sup> “Verbal participle” (**vinai eccam**) is a general term referring to the adverbial participle, the infinitive, the conditional, the causal, the concessive of fact, and the concessive of supposition. “Nominal participle” (**peyar eccam**) refers to the adjectival participle.

Traditional commentators have identified the forms under discussion in this chapter as **vinai ecca murru** “finite forms (that are) verbal participles” (cf. Naccinārkkiniyar’s commentary on *tiru*:169-172, and the Old Commentary on *pati*.17:6) and **vinai ecca vinai k kurippu murru** “appellatives (that are) verbal participles” (cf. Naccinārkkiniyar’s commentary on *tiru*:192 and the Old Commentary on *pati*.32:15).

participle in the same way as the personal verb.<sup>2</sup> The verbal noun, when modifying a nominal, gives the sense of a non-past adjectival participle; when modifying a verb, that of an infinitive.<sup>3</sup>

The subject of the item (personal verb, adjectival noun, or verbal noun) that functions as the participle and the subject of the main verb in the same clause are the same. Further, this item, which gives the sense of the participle, can be positive or negative. When negative, it functions like a negative adverbial participle. See "The Negative Adverbial Participle" and "The Negative Verbal Noun."

**FORMATION:** There is no separate morphological formation. Personal verbs, adjectival nouns, and participial nouns are formally followed or are semantically completed by an adjectival participle, adverbial participle, causal, concessive of fact, conditional, imperative, infinitive, personal verb, or a verbal noun. More than one adjectival noun, participial noun, or personal verb can occur in apposition and function like participles. Also a verbal noun ending with *al* or *(t)tal* is followed by a nominal or another verb form.

---

<sup>2</sup> For information on the connection between the participial noun and the personal verb, see "Past Participial Nouns."

<sup>3</sup> For a similar observation, see R. Kothandaraman in *Vaiyai* (1975:11-13).

## EXAMPLES

*Structure and Example*

(adjectival noun + adverbial participle)

**kaccināṇ kalalināṇ ceccai k kaṇṇiyan ... tukilināṇ ...** taṭakkaiyin  
iyala ēnti men tōḷ pal piṇai taḷī t talaittantu kunrutōrāṭal

(tiru:208, 214-217)

‘the dancing of Murukan who, wearing a sash, warrior’s anklets, a head-garland of ceccai leaves, and a fine garment, leads the (kuravai) dance on every mountain, holding by his strong firm hands the many fawn(-like women) and embracing their soft shoulders’

[The adjectival nouns (= participles) **kaccināṇ** ‘he, who has a sash’, **kalalināṇ** ‘he, who has the warrior’s anklets’, **ceccai-k-kaṇṇiyan** ‘he who has a head-garland of ceccai leaves’, and **tukilināṇ** ‘he, who has a fine garment’ are in apposition forming the “subject” which is semantically completed by the adverbial participle **ēnti** < **ēntu** ‘to hold, carry.’ The adjectival nouns here function like adverbial participles: e.g., **kaccināṇ āy** ‘as a man wearing a sash’, **kalalināṇ āy** ‘as a man wearing a head-garland’, and **tukilināṇ āy** ‘as a man wearing a fine garment.’]

(participial noun + adjectival participle)

**iyalinal olkinaḷ āṭum** maṭamakaḷ (pati.51:10)

‘the innocent woman who dances (by) moving around and swaying gently’

[There are two participial nouns functioning as participles: **iyalinal** ‘one who moves around’ and **olkinaḷ** ‘one who sways gently.’ The adjectival participle is **āṭum** < **āṭu** ‘to dance.’ Here, the participial

nouns fill the function of an adverbial participle (like *iyali* 'moving around'; *olki* 'swaying').]

(participial noun + adverbial participle)

**naṭuṅkuvaṇaḷ ninru** niṇ eṇiyar ōkkiya ciṟu ceṇ kuvaḷai (*pati.52:21-22*)  
'the small red water-lily which she (your queen) raised in order to toss/chase you, while **standing shuddering** (due to sulking)'

[The participial noun (= participle) is **naṭuṅkuvaṇaḷ** 'one who trembles/shudders.' Here it functions like an adverbial participle (e.g., **naṭuṅki** 'trembling'). The adverbial participle which follows **naṭuṅkuvaṇaḷ** is **ninru** < *niḷ* 'to stand.']

koḷuṅkurai ... **viraivaṇaṇ cuṭṭu** ... tiṇm eṇa t tarutalin

(*pura.150:9, 12, 13*)

'since he rushed and baked a fat piece of animal flesh and gave it to us saying "Eat" '

[The participial noun (= participle) is **viraivaṇaṇ** 'one who rushes.' Here it fills the function of an adverbial participle (like **viraintu** 'having hurried; rushed, and ...'). The adverbial participle which follows **viraivaṇaṇ** is **cuṭṭu** < *cuṭu* 'to burn, bake.']

(participial noun + imperative)

matiyiṇ **tēyvāṇa keṭuka** niṇ tevvar ākkam (*matu:195-196*)

'**May** your enemies' prosperity **wane and perish** like the moon.'

[The participial noun (= participle) is **tēyvāṇa** 'those which will wear out.' Here it functions like an adverbial participle (e.g., **tēyntu** 'having waned'). The imperative is **keṭuka** 'May (they) **perish**.' Also note that the plural form **tēyvāṇa** indicates the plurality of prosperity/wealth, **ākkam**.]



(participial noun + infinitive)

**viraivaṇar** kātalar **pukutara** (kali.134:26)

‘as her lover **arrived hurriedly**’

[The participial noun (= participle) is **viraivaṇar** ‘one who hurries/rushes.’ Here it functions like an adverbial participle (**viraintu** ‘hurrying’). The infinitive is **pukutara** ‘to enter, arrive.’]

tīñ cēṇṇu k kūviyar **tūṅkuvaṇar uṇaṅka**<sup>4</sup> (matu:627)

‘as the **people** selling cakes (soaking) in sugar syrup **slept bending down**’

[The participial noun (= participle) is **tūṅkuvaṇar** ‘those who are bending down.’ Here it fills the function of an adverbial participle (e.g., **tūṅki** ‘bending down’). The infinitive is **uṇaṅka** ‘to sleep.’]

(personal verb + adjectival participle ± postposition)

**vēṅkai koykuvam cenruḷi** (aka.48:6)

‘**when** we went **to pick vēṅkai** (flowers)’

[The personal verb (= participle) is **koykuvam** ‘we will pick.’ Here it fills the function of an infinitive (like **koyya** ‘to pick’). **cenruḷi** < **cenr** past/completive stem + **uḷi** postposition.]

eyiṇṇikku i-n-nilai aṇiya c **collinēn irakkum aḷavai** ... viṭalai

viraiyātimē (aink.364:2-4)

‘O Viṭalai, do not rush **until I** tell about this situation to the Eyirri **and beg her** (to go with you).’

---

<sup>4</sup> This is an excellent example to show that **tūṅku** ‘to bend down, curve down’ and **uṇaṅku** ‘to sleep’ were distinct verbs in classical Tamil. In modern Tamil both mean ‘to sleep.’

[The personal verb (= participle) is **collinēn** 'I told.' Here it fills the function of an adverbial participle (like **colli** 'told and ...'). **irakkum** is the adjectival participle < **ira** 'to beg'; **aḷavai** is the postposition. **irakkum aḷavai** 'until (I) beg her.']

**niḷa nākam nalkiya kalinkam āl amar celvaṛku amarntaṇaṇ koṭutta**  
... āy (ciru:96-97, 99)

'Āy, **who willingly** gave to the Lord, who is sitting under the banyan tree, the fine cloth which the blue serpent gave him'

[The personal verb (= participle) is **amarntaṇaṇ** 'he liked it wholeheartedly.' Here it fills the function of an adverbial participle (like **amarntu** 'liking it wholeheartedly'). **koṭutta** is the adjectival participle < **koṭu** 'to give away.']

**āymakaḷ ... ney vilaikku aṭṭi p pacum poṇ koḷḷāḷ erumai nal āṇ karu**  
**nāku perūm ... kuṭi** (peru:162, 164-166)

'neighborhoods where the shepherdess (from the agricultural land) **would not get gold** (as the price) for selling ghee (to the mountain people) but **would** (rather) **get** water buffalo, good cows, and black calves'

[Note that the personal verb (= participle) **koḷḷāḷ** 'she would not get' is negative. Here it fills the function of an adverbial participle (like **koḷḷātu** 'without getting'). **perūm** is the adjectival participle < **peru** 'to get, obtain.']

**nocci cūlvāṇa malarum mauval** (aka.23:11-12)

'wild jasmine **which bloom surrounding** the nocci (trees)'

[The personal verb (= participle) is **cūlvāṇa** 'they will surround.' Here it performs the function of an adverbial participle (like **cūlntu** 'having surrounded; surrounding'). **malarum** is the adjectival participle < **malar** 'to bloom.']

ilai ila malarnta ... ilavam (aka.11:3)

‘ilavam which have bloomed without leaves’

[The personal verb (= participle) is *ila* ‘those which do not have.’ Note that it is negative. Here it fills the function of an adverbial participle (like *inri* ‘without’). The adjectival participle is *malarnta* < *malar* ‘to bloom.’]

(personal verb + adverbial participle)

uvakai maraiyinen etir cenru i-m-manai anru ahtu um manai enra  
ennum tannum nōkki (aka.56:13-15)

‘He looked at himself and me, who went in front of him (while) hiding my joy and said, “This is not your house. That is your house,” and ...’

[The personal verb (= participle) is *maraiyinen* ‘I hid/concealed.’ Here it functions like an adverbial participle (like *maraittu* ‘having concealed/hid’). The adverbial participle which follows the personal verb *maraiyinen* is *cenru* < *cel* ‘to go.’]

(personal verb + causal)

citaintatu manra nī civantanai nōkkalin ... kamaru kaviṇē  
(pati.27:1, 16)

‘The desirable fascinating beauty (of your enemy countries) was demolished since you looked (at them) angrily.’

[The personal verb (= participle) is *civantanai* ‘you got angry.’ Here it functions like an adverbial participle (like *civantu* ‘having gotten angry’). *nōkkalin* ‘since (you) look at’ is the causal < *nōkku* ‘to look at.’]

cel inī akattu ena k koṭupporu ollān kaluṭalin (aka.66:15-16)  
‘since (the child) was full of tears without agreeing with (his

father) who let him go saying “Go now, inside (the house)” ’  
 [The personal verb (= participle) **ollān** ‘he will not agree’ is negative. Here it functions like an adverbial participle (like **ollātu** ‘without agreeing’). **kaluṭṭalin** ‘since (his) eyes are full of tears’ is the causal < **kaluṭ** ‘to be filled with tears; to be cloudy.’ Note that the stem **koṭu** (in **koṭuppōrku**) is here interpreted to mean ‘to let go/free.’ This is an excellent example which provides an insight into the relation between **koṭ** ‘to draw ... toward self; take’ and **koṭu** ‘to push ... from self; give away.’]

(personal verb + concessive of fact)

**men** **tōḷ** **in** **tuyil** **eṇṇum** **perāan** **peyarinum** **muniyal** **urāan**  
 (kuri:242-243)  
 ‘He is not frustrated **even if he leaves without** always **getting** (to) sleep on (her) soft shoulder.’  
 ‘He is not frustrated even if he has to leave without always getting (to) sleep on (her) soft shoulder.’  
 [The personal verb (= participle) **perāan** ‘he will not get’ is negative. Here it functions as an adverbial participle (like **perātu** ‘without getting’). The concessive of fact is **peyarinum** ‘even if he leaves.’]

(personal verb + conditional)

**niḷa** **acaiyinir** **iruppin** **pala** **tiṇam** **peyarpavai** **kēṭkuvir** (malai:290-291)  
 ‘If you will remain resting in the shade, you will hear many (birds and animals) moving in many directions.’  
 [The personal verb (= participle) **acaiyinir** ‘you will move with restraint; you will rest’ is negative. Here it functions like an adverbial participle (like **acaintu** ‘moving with restraint’). The conditional is **iruppin** ‘if you will remain/stay.’]

(personal verb + imperative)

**karumpiṇ tīñ cāru virumpiṇir micaimin** (peru:262)

‘Drink the sweet juice of the sugarcane with a liking.’

[The personal verb (= participle) is **virumpiṇir** ‘you liked.’ Here it fills the function of an adverbial participle (e.g., **virumpi** ‘having liked’). The imperative is **micaimin** ‘Drink!']

(personal verb + infinitive)

**vār mayir uḷarinaḷ koṭicci ... kuṟiñci pāṭa** (aka.102:5, 6)

‘as the Koṭicci sings the kuṟiñci melody (while) combing her long hair (with her fingers)’

[The personal verb (= participle) **uḷarinaḷ** ‘she combed her hair with her fingers.’ Here it fills the function of an adverbial participle (like **uḷari** ‘having combed; combing’). The infinitive is **pāṭa** ‘to sing.’]

**varutal talaivar vāyvatu nī nin ... evvam kaḷai māyōy eṇa k kāṭṭavum**

**kāṇāḷ ... pū p pōl uṇkaṇ pulampu muttu uraiṭṭa**

(mull:20, 21-23)

‘Although (her attendants) repeatedly reassured her saying, “The arrival of your lover (the king) will happen. Get rid of your distress,” she **did not understand**. As isolated pearl-like tears **gathered** in her flower-like attractive eyes, ...’

[The personal verb (= participle) **kāṇāḷ** ‘she will not see/realize’ is negative. Here it fills the function of an adverbial participle (like **kāṇātu** ‘without seeing/understanding’). The infinitive is **uraiṭṭa** ‘to accumulate.’]

**muṭalai yākkai muḷu vali mākkal ... tuvalai t taṇ tuḷi pēṇār ... vēṇṭu**

**vayiṇ tiritara**

(neṭu:32, 34, 35)

‘as people with a firm body and wholesome strength **wandered around** wherever they wanted **without caring** for the cool drops of the sprinkle/rain’

[The personal verb (= participle) **pēṇār** ‘they will not be concerned about; they will not care for’ is negative. Here it functions like an adverbial participle (e.g., **pēṇātu** ‘without caring for; without being concerned about’). The infinitive is **tiritara** ‘to wander around.’]

(personal verb + personal verb)

mālaiyum ullār āyiṇ kālai yāṅku ākuvam kol pāṇa eṇra maṇaiyōḷ col  
etir collal **cellēṇ** cevvaḷi nal yāl **icaiyiṇēṇ** ... avar tīraṁ **celvēṇ**  
**kaṇṭaṇēṇ** yāṇē ... ūraṇ ... tērē (aka.14:12-15, 17, 21)

‘I, who approached the Ūraṇ’s wife as I played the cevvaḷi melody on my harp, **without being able** to answer her when she said, “O bard, if my lover does not think of us (hon.) even in the evening what will become of us (hon.) in the morning?,” saw the Ūraṇ’s chariot (arriving).’

[Three personal verbs function like participles: **cellēṇ** ‘I am not able’, **icaiyiṇēṇ** ‘I played’, and **celvēṇ** ‘I will go.’ Two of them function like adverbial participles (e.g., **cellātu** ‘without being able to’ and **icaittu** ‘playing’), whereas **celvēṇ** functions like an adjectival participle (e.g., **cenra yāṇ** ‘I who went’). The personal verb **kaṇṭaṇēṇ** ‘I saw’ following them is the predicate.]

alar vāy p peṇṭir innā iṇ urai kēṭṭa cinnāl ariyēṇ pōla **uyirēṇ** nariya  
nārum niṇ katuppu **eṇrēṇē** (narr.143:7-10)

‘Within a few days / On those few days when I heard the cruel sweet talk of the gossiping women (about my daughter’s love with a man), I did not sigh like someone who did not know anything, but said (to my daughter), “Your hair smells with fragrance.” ’

[The personal verb (= participle) **uyirēn** ‘I did not breathe/sigh’ is negative. Here it functions like an adverbial participle (e.g., **uyirāmal** ‘without breathing’). The personal verb which follows it as predicate is **enrēn** ‘I said.’]

**kāṇku vantiṇē** ‘I came to see you.’ (pati.41:16)

[The personal verb (= participle) is **kāṇku** ‘I see, I am seeing.’ Here it functions as an infinitive (like **kāṇa** ‘to see’). The personal verb which follows it as predicate is **vantiṇ** ‘I have come.’]

**niṇ kaṇṭanen varuval**<sup>5</sup> (pura.23:17)

‘(Here) I come, seeing you (in your landscape).’

The personal verb (= participle) is **kaṇṭanen** ‘I saw.’ Here it functions as an adverbial participle (**kaṇṭu** ‘having seen’). The personal verb which follows it as predicate is **varuval** ‘(Here), I come.’]

**aḷikkeṇa irakku vārēn** eñci k kūrēn (pati.61:10-11)

‘I will not come (for) begging. I will not state (your greatness) leaving behind something.’

[The personal verb (= participle) is **irakku** ‘I beg.’ Here it functions as an infinitive (like **irakka** ‘to beg’). The personal verb following it as predicate is **vārēn** ‘I will not come.’]

**varuntal ... tōḷi ... uraittaṇam varukam** (narr.88:2, 3)

‘My friend, do not grieve. Let us go, talk (to your lover about your distress), and come (back).’

---

<sup>5</sup> A traditional commentator, U.V. Saminathier, takes **varuval** to mean ‘I came; I (have) come.’

[The personal verb (= participle) is **uraittaṇam** 'we stated.' Here it functions as an adverbial participle (like **uraittu** 'having stated; stating'). The personal verb following it as predicate is **varukam** 'We will come.']

cellal **tīrkkam celvām** (narr.284:4)

'Let us go in order to relieve (her) grief.'

[The personal verb (= participle) is **tīrkkam** 'we shall remove/cure / get rid of.' Here it functions as an infinitive (like **tīrka** 'to remove/cure/relieve'). The personal verb following it as predicate is **celvām** 'We shall go.']

niṇ **nayantu varuvēm kaṇṭaṇam** (pati.23:11)

'We, who were coming seeking you, saw ...'

[The personal verb (= participle) is **varuvēm** 'those of us who will come.' Here it functions like an adjectival participle (e.g., **varukinra yām** 'we who are coming'). The personal verb following it as predicate is **kaṇṭaṇam** 'We saw.']

eṇ **ciṟumaiyiṇ ilittu nōkkāṇ** ... vallē ... **nalkiyōṇē**

(puṛa.387:20, 26, 27)

'He quickly provided (gifts) without looking with despise because of my lowliness.'

'He quickly provided (gifts) without treating me with despise because of my lowliness.'

[The personal verb (= participle) is **nōkkāṇ** 'he will not look/consider.' Here it functions like an adverbial participle (e.g., **nōkkāmal** 'without looking/considering'). The personal verb following it as predicate is **nalkiyōṇ** 'he gave, provided.']



(personal verb + verbal noun)

cellāmō ... **kaṇṭaṇam** vararkē (pati.57:6, 15)

‘Shall we go to see (him, our patron) and return?’

[The personal verb (= participle) is **kaṇṭaṇam** ‘We saw.’ Here it functions as an adverbial participle (like **kaṇṭu** ‘having seen, (after) seeing’). The verbal noun following it is **varal** ‘coming, returning.’]

kaiyaṛu neñcattu evvam nīṅka **alāam** uraitalum uriyam

(aka.113:22-23)

‘We (hon.) have the right to stay/remain without crying, when the grief in (our) distressed heart is gone.’

[The personal verb (= participle) **alāam** ‘We will not cry’ is negative. Here it functions as an adverbial participle (like **alātu** ‘without crying’). The verbal noun following it is **uraital** ‘staying.’]

Formation mechanism: verbal noun in **al/(t)tal** + nominal or verb

### *Structure and Example*

(verbal noun + nominal)

kalam taral uḷḷam

(aka.3:12)

‘heart with (the thought of) bringing jewelry’

[**taral** (verbal noun) < **tar** ‘to bring.’ Here, it functions as an adjectival participle (like **tarum** ‘that which brings’).]

viṇ celal marapiṇ aiyar

(tiru:107)

‘the sages who have the legend of moving in the sky’

‘sages who are believed to move around in the sky’

[**celal** (verbal noun) < **cel** ‘to go, leave for a destination.’ Here, it functions as an adjectival participle (like **cellum** ‘those who go’).]

cēy **varal kānyār̥ru** k kol karai (ciṛu:3-4)  
 ‘the eroded bank of the forest river **which is coming** from a distance’

[**varal** (verbal noun) < **var** ‘to come.’ Here, it functions as an adjectival participle (like **varum** ‘that which comes’).]

vaṇaintu **varal** iḷa **mulai** (pati.54:4)  
 ‘young breasts which are **permanently decorated**’

[**varal** (verbal noun) < **var** ‘to come.’ Here, it functions as an adjectival participle (like **varum** ‘that which comes’). The combination of an adverbial participle and **var(u)** used in any form provides the sense of a permanent or recurring action: **vaṇaintu varal** ‘decorated permanently.’]

(verbal noun + verbal)

tēṛal aṛiyātu uṇṭa kaṭuvaṇ ayalatu ... cāntam **ēṛal cellātu** ... aṭukkattu  
 makiḷntu kaṇpaṭukkum kuṛiyā iṇpam (aka.2:4-8)  
 ‘the unexpected pleasure of the monkey which drank the nectar (from the flowers) unknowingly and sleeps delightfully on the mountain range, **not being able to climb up** (even) the sandalwood tree that is close by’

[**ēṛal** (verbal noun) < **ēṛu** ‘to climb up.’ Here, it functions as an infinitive (like **ēṛa** ‘to climb up’). The verbal form which follows it, **cellātu** ‘not being able to’, is a negative adverbial participle.]

naṭpu k **koḷal vēṇṭi** nayanticinōr (peru.425)  
 ‘those who befriended (him) **wanting to have** (his) friendship’

[**koḷal** (verbal noun) < **koḷ** ‘to have, accept.’ Here, it functions as

an infinitive (like **koḷa** 'in order to have/accept'). The verbal form which follows it, **vēṇṭi** 'wanting; having wanted', is an adverbial participle.]

**vāṭtal vēṇṭi p poy kūrēn** (*pura.139:5-6*)

'I will not tell lies **wishing to thrive.**'

[**vāṭtal** (verbal noun) < **vāṭ** 'to live, prosper, thrive.' Here, it functions as an infinitive (like **vāḷa** 'in order to live/prosper/thrive'). The verbal form which follows it, **vēṇṭi** 'wanting, wishing', is an adverbial participle.]

## SECTION 6



## A Note On Mood

Mood is understood in this study as that which “designates by the form of the verb the mode or manner in which the speaker conceives of an assertion concerning the subject.”<sup>1</sup> The various modes of assertion expressed in classical Tamil can be translated as ‘X can/let/may/will/should verb.’ Among these, verb forms which express the notions of command, request, wish, blessing, and curse are described in the chapters on the imperative/optative; those expressing the notion of possibility of an action/state are given in “The Potential.” The interrogative and the negative moods are discussed in “The Interrogative” and “The Negative *al* and *il*.” It may be noted that the first person and the second person inclusive non-past personal verbs give the sense ‘will/shall’ whenever necessary.

---

<sup>1</sup> Smyth:398.

## THE IMPERATIVE/OPTATIVE

(“do/may ... ”)

GENERAL: See “A Note on Mood.” The imperative/optative form of a verb is used to express the notions of command, request, wish, blessing, or curse.<sup>1</sup> The basic semantic distinction one could make between the Tamil imperative and optative is that the former expresses commands whereas the latter expresses requests, wishes, or blessings. If one were to make a categorical distinction between verb forms which express a command and those which express a request etc., one will find that both

---

<sup>1</sup> Two terms **ēval** ‘command’ and **viyaṅkōḷ** ‘taking up a mode of action’ are found in the tradition to refer to the imperative/optative forms. The term **viyaṅkōḷ** is here translated as ‘taking up a mode of action’ on the basis of the contexts where the compound stem **viyaṅkoḷ** and the noun **viyam** are used in classical Tamil and the first Tamil epic, the Cilappatikāram. Note that in one context, classical Tamil uses both **ēval** and **viyaṅkoḷ**: **ēval viyaṅkoṇṭu** ilaiyarotu eḷutarum ollār ‘enemies who **command** youngsters and **take up the same mode of action** and appear (in the battlefield) along with their commandos’ (*pati.54:15*). This context suggests that **ēval** means ‘command’ that is addressed to the second person while **viyaṅkoḷ** means ‘to take up a mode of action’ by the first person.

appear in the first, second, and third person in classical Tamil. In addition, some forms, for example, **kēḷāy** ‘Listen’ could be understood either as an imperative expressing a command or as an optative expressing a request depending upon the context. Similarly, forms like **vāḷi** ‘May ... prosper/thrive’ and **vāḷka** ‘May ... prosper/thrive’, though different in structure, express the same sense wishing/blessing. While **vāḷka** cannot be interpreted as expressing a request or a command, a form like **varuka** ‘Come on’ which is structurally similar to **vāḷka** cannot be interpreted as a blessing. Then the questions are “What separates the two categories — semantic function or grammatical structure? Do we need two separate categories at all?”<sup>2</sup> In the absence of a clearcut answer, the two categories, the imperative and the optative, are treated under one heading in this study.

Two types of these forms appear — singular and plural. The subject of both the singular and plural types of the imperative/optative is in the first, second, or third person, and any gender. There are imperative/optative forms which are not overtly singular or plural. In those cases, the grammatical number (singular or plural) of the subject can only be understood from the context.

**FORMATION:** The imperative/optative notions are expressed in four ways.

- (i) by using the verb stem without any suffixes;
- (ii) by suffixation:
  - (a) adding one or two imperative/optative suffixes directly to the verb stem

---

<sup>2</sup> To get a sense of how the tradition acknowledges this dilemma, motivated readers are urged to read the commentaries by Teyvaccilaiyār and Cēṇāvaraiyar on Tolkāppiyam, collatikāram, Rule 219.



(b) adding (t/n)t to the verb stem before adding certain imperative/optative suffixes;

(iii) by extension:

extending the use of a verbal noun in **al** or (t)tal to express an imperative/optative notion and extending the use of a finite verb in the same way;

(iv) by periphrasis:

a verbal noun ending with **al** or an infinitive ending with **a** or **iyar** is followed by the word **vēṇṭum** 'is wished, is necessary.'

No singular-plural distinction is made when a verbal noun is extended to indicate an imperative/optative sense. For information on the negative type, see "The Negative Imperative/Optative."

The imperative/optative suffixes are: **a**, **ar**, **āy**, **i**, **ika**, **ikā**, **icin**, **iya**, **iyar(ō)**, **(ī)iyar(ō)**, **(ū)u**, **(u)m**, **ē**, **ai**, **aikka**, **aikā**, **aippāy**, **ō**, **(k)ka**, **kamā**, **ku**, **mati**, **min**, **mē**, and **mō**.<sup>3</sup> Among these, **(ī)iyar**, **(k)ka**, **kamā**, **m**, and **mō** are shared by the singular and the plural, as will be noted below.

---

<sup>3</sup> Some of these suffixes (e.g., **icin**, **ku**, and **m**) occur also in other verb forms. One calls them "imperative/optative" suffixes with an understanding that they occur elsewhere also.

Affixes found after the verb stem and (t/n)t in the imperative/optative forms are here treated as imperative/optative suffixes. The semantic distinction between these various suffixes is not clear. Also some of these suffixes (e.g., **iyar**, **īiyar**, and **īiyarō**) are not different altogether, but are contextual variants of one form. For another discussion of these forms, see Israel (1972:331-337).

## EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: using bare verb stem

**uva** ini vāli tōli (aka.65:7)  
 [uva ‘to rejoice’; singular]  
 ‘Rejoice now, my companion.’

**ī** eṇa irattal ilintaṇru (pura.204:1)  
 [ī ‘to give, bestow’; singular]  
 ‘It is not lowly to ask “Give.” ’

**annāy** vāli **vēṇṭu** annai (aka.48:1)  
 [vēṇṭu ‘to listen, wish for’; singular]  
 ‘Mother, may you prosper. Listen.’

**pūṇ** kaṭaṇ entai nī iravalar puravē (pura.203:12)  
 [pūṇ ‘to wear, take up’; singular]  
 ‘Our father, take up (the task of) protecting the suppliants.’

**maṭa** mayil cāyalai vantikka **vār** (pari.20:69-70)  
 [var ‘to come’; singular]  
 ‘Come to worship this gentle woman who is like an innocent peacock.’  
 (This form **vār** ‘Come’ is interesting. The actual text reads **vāreṇa** where **vār** is followed by the quotative **eṇa** ‘thus.’ The monosyllabic stem \*var ‘to come’ when combined with **eṇa** should give rise to \*varreṇa but has not.<sup>4</sup>)

---

<sup>4</sup> One cannot but recall Tolkāppiyam, eluttatikāram, Ḵampūraṇam, Rule 49, which ordains that **r** cannot occur as a vowelless consonant (**orru**) in a monosyllabic word where the vowel is short.

**cel inī** (aka.19:8)  
 [cel 'to go'; singular]  
 'Go, now!'

**kēḷ avanḡ nilaiyē** (peru:38)  
 [kēḷ 'to listen'; singular]  
 'Hear about his status.'

eṇ kai **vanti** (kali.85:20)  
 [var 'to come'; singular]<sup>5</sup>  
 'Come on into my hands, please.'

Formation mechanism: suffixation

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**a:**

(bare stem + a)

yāy aṛintu **uṇara** (aka.203:2)  
 [uṇar 'to realize, understand'; uṇara singular]  
 'May (her) mother know (about her love with a man) and understand.'  
 (Note that the infinitive form would also be uṇara 'to realize.')

**ar:**

(bare stem + ar)

tēyar eṇ uyir (narr.197:4)  
 [tēy 'to wear out'; tēyar singular]  
 'May my life(breath) wear out.'  
 (tēyar could be a contracted form of tēyiyar.)

---

<sup>5</sup> **vanti** is taken to be a compound stem. See "The Compound Stem" for a discussion of **ī**.

**āy:**

(bare stem + āy)

it talai ninnoṭu viṇaval **kēlāy** (aka.7:16-17)  
 [kēl 'to ask'; kēlāy singular]<sup>6</sup>  
 'Here I shall ask you. **Listen!**'

**i:**

(bare stem + i)

vāli eṇ neñcē (aka.149:7)  
 [vāl 'to live, prosper, thrive'; vāli singular]  
 'O my heart, **may** you prosper.'

aiya ciṛitu eṇai **ūkki** (kali.37:15)  
 [ūkku 'to swing, raise by swinging'; ūkki singular]  
 'O lord, **swing** me a little.'

(bare stem + tt + i)

paṇi vārum kaṇṇavar neñcam kaṇarṛupu **kātti** varavu (pari.6:85-86)  
 [kā 'to shield, preempt'; kātti singular]  
 'Avoid (your) continual burning of the hearts of women who (already)  
 have their eyes shedding tears.'  
 'Avoid continuously making your women steam up in their hearts.'

(bare stem + t + i)

muṭa mutir pārppānai t tōli nī **pōrruti** (kali.65:8-9)

<sup>6</sup> The Tolkāppiyam and its commentators go in the opposite direction and derive **kēl** from **kēlāy**: cf. Tolkāppiyam, collatikāram, Cēṇāvaraiyam, Rule 450, and its commentary.

Note that normally the PNG suffix **āy** when added directly to a verb stem generates a negative personal verb. One has to be careful not to confuse the imperative/optative ending with **āy** and the negative personal verb ending with **āy**, since both are structurally similar. See "Negative Personal Verbs" for examples of verb forms ending with **āy**.

[**pōrru** 'to appreciate'; **pōrruti** singular]  
 'Appreciate the old lame brahmin, O my friend.'

**ika**: It could be understood as consisting of two suffixes, **i** and **ka**.

(bare stem + **t** + **ika**)

vallai k kaṭavumati tērē **cenrika** (narr.321:8)  
 [**cel** 'to leave'; **cenrika** singular]  
 'Rush the chariot fast. Let me leave.'

**ikā**: It could be understood as consisting of two suffixes, **i** and **kā**.

(bare stem + **ikā**)

kōṭu eḷuntu āṭum kaṇa maṇi **kāṇikā** (kali.105:40)  
 [**kāṇ** 'to look at, see'; **kāṇikā** singular]  
 'Look at the bunch of bells which swing as the horns (of the bull) lift up.'

(bare stem + **t** + **ikā**)

ivaḷ **kāṇṭikā** (kali.99:9)  
 [**kāṇ** 'to look at, see'; **kāṇṭikā** singular]  
 'Look at her!'

**icin**:

(bare stem + **icin**)

cuṭum irai **ārricin** aṭi cērntu cārṛumin (pari.8:79)  
 [**ārru** 'to appease, cool off'; **ārricin** singular]  
 'The god will hurt me. Appease him, joining his feet. Announce it.'  
 'The god will hurt me. Appease him, falling at his feet. Announce it.'

(bare stem + **tt** + **icin**)

tiruntilai neṭuvēḷ **vaṭitticin** (pura.180:13)

[**vaṭi** 'to make by molding'; **vaṭitticin** singular]

'**Make** a long spear with a perfect leaf/tip.'

**iya**: It could be understood as consisting of two suffixes (**i** + glide + **a**).

(bare stem + **iya**)

ayiraipporuna ... **vāliya** (pati.21:29, 38)

[**vāl** 'to live, prosper, thrive'; **vāliya** singular]

'O warrior of the Ayirai hills, **may** you **prosper**.'

**iyar(ō)**: It can be understood as consisting of two suffixes (**i** + glide + **ar**). And **ō** can be treated as a particle.

(bare stem + **iyar**)

yān **ākiyar** niñ neñcu nērpavaḷē (kuru.49:5)

[**āku** 'to become'; **ākiyar** singular]

'**May I become** the one who will be fit for your heart!'

(Note that the subject is in the first person, **yān** 'I.')

(bare stem + **t** + **iyar**)

puḷ ṍppi el paṭa **varutiya** (kuri:38-39)

[**var** 'to come, return'; **varutiya** plural]

'Drive away the birds (in the millet field) and **return** home when the sun sets.'

(bare stem + **iyarō**)

il **ākiyarō** kālai mālai (pura.232:1)

[**āku** 'to become'; **ākiyarō** plural]

'**May** the days and nights **become non-existent**.'

naṭukku **inri** niliyarō ... imayamum potiyamum pōṇrē

(pura.2:20, 24)

[**nil** 'to stand, stay, live long'; **niliyarō** singular]

**‘Like the Himalayas (in the north) and the Potiyam (in the south),  
may you stand/live for ever without quaking.’**

**(ĭ)iyar(ō)**: It could be understood as consisting of two suffixes (**i** + glide **y** + **ar**). And **ō** can be treated as a particle. The **īi** in **(ĭ)iyar(ō)** is due to the elongation of **i**.

(bare stem + **iyar**)

nillātu paṭāa c **celīyar** niṇ pakaivar mīṇē (*pura.24:24-25*)

[**cel** ‘to go, leave’; **celīyar** plural]

**‘May the stars of your enemies perish without staying and leave.’**

koḷai val vāḷkkai num kiḷai iṇitu **uṇīyar**

(*pati.49:3*)

[**uṇ** ‘to enjoy, consume, eat’; **uṇīyar** plural]

**‘May your clan / branch of kin happily enjoy the life skilled in music.’**

(bare stem + **iyarō**)

varaiyā niraiyattu c **celīyarō** aṇṇai

(*kuṛu.292:6*)

[**cel** ‘to go, leave’; **celīyarō** singular]

**‘May (my) mother go to the limitless hell.’**

(**celīyarō** here expresses a sense of wish or curse.)

**(ū)u**<sup>7</sup>:

(stem + **u**)

orūu nī em kūntal koḷḷal

(*kali.87:1*)

[**oru** ‘to move away from, shun’; **orūu** singular]

**‘You move/go away. Do not grab our (hon.) tresses.’**

---

<sup>7</sup> The elongation is due to metrical requirement. See “Lengthening of Sounds (**a|apeṭai**) and Vowel Clusters” for a discussion of metrical requirement.

ē:

(bare stem + glide + ē)

taṇ polil vāvē (aka.240:14-15)

[vā ‘Come’ < var ‘to come’; vāvē singular]<sup>8</sup>

‘Come (along) to the cool grove.’

ai:

(bare stem + t + ai)

virintoli kūntāl kaṇṭai emakku p perum poṇ paṭukuvai paṇṭu

(kali.64:6-7)

[kāṇ ‘to see’; kaṇṭai singular]

‘O you with lustrous hair that is let down, see, you owe us a great deal of gold from the past.’

iṇṇum ... oru kāl nī vantai

(kali.63:12)

[var ‘to come’; vantai singular]

‘Come one more time.’

(bare stem + tt + ai)

vēy naral viṭarakam nī oṇṇu pāṭittai

(kali.40:10)

[pāṭu ‘to sing’; pāṭittai singular]

‘Sing something about the (lover’s) cliff where the bamboos make noise.’

(This is the only example of its kind. The i seems to be part of the stem. It is quite conceivable that the stem-final u in pāṭu is changed to i as a result of palatalization when the suffix ai is added — hence pāṭittai instead of \*pāṭuttai.)

<sup>8</sup> Compare modern Tamil vāyēn ‘Please, come’ or ‘Why don’t you come.’ In some colloquial dialects of modern Tamil, the ē is used at the end of some address forms and imperative forms: e.g., ennavē ‘Hey, what?’; pōvē ‘Go, get lost!’



(compound stem + tt + ai)

ninṇōṭu ucāvuvēṇ **ninṛittai** (kali.94:4)

[**niḷ** 'to stay, stand'; **ninṛi** compound stem; **ninṛittai** singular]

'Let me talk to you. **Please stay.**'

**aikka**: It could be a composit of two suffixes, **ai** and **kka**.

(bare stem + t + **aikka**)

inṛai aḷavai **cenṛaikka enṛi** (kuru.383:3)

[**cel** 'to go, leave'; **cenṛaikka** singular]

'You said (to your lover) "**Let the time/duration of today pass.**" '

**aikā**: It could be a composit of two suffixes, **ai** and **kā**.

(bare stem + t + **aikā**)

veḷ ēru **kaṇṭaikā** (kali.105:44)

[**kāṇ** 'to see'; **kaṇṭaikā** singular]

'**Look at the white bull.**'

**aippāy**: It might be a composit of **ai**, **pp**, and **āy**.

(bare stem + t + **aippāy**)

inṇi yātum miḷkūṛṛam yām ilam eṇṇum takaiyatu **kāṇṭaippāy neñcē**

... kaṇ pāyal koḷa (kali.87:14-15, 16)

[**kāṇ** 'to see, consider'; **kāṇṭaippāy** singular]<sup>9</sup>

'O my heart, **consider** the fact that she might say that we do not have any more words (to say) so that her eyes could get (some) sleep.'

---

<sup>9</sup> **kāṇṭaippāy** is one of a kind in classical Tamil. See "Notes on Miscellaneous Items" for a discussion of **pp**.

**ō:**(bare stem + **ō**)**kāppuṭai vāyil pōrrō** (narr.132:8)[**pōrru** 'to care for, take care of'; **pōrrō** plural]

'Take care of the protected doors.'

(The **ō** can be construed just as a particle.)**(k)ka:**(bare stem + **kka**)**vaḷi vaḷi c ciṛakka niṇ valam paṭu koṛṛam** (matu:194)[**ciṛa** 'to excel, be eminent, surpass'; **ciṛakka** singular]

'May your triumphant victory excel for many generations.'

**vaiyai niṇ payam pāṭi viṭivu uṛṛu ēmākka** (pari.7:85)[**ēmā** < **ēm** 'secure feeling' + **ā(r)** 'to be full'; **ēmākka** plural]<sup>10</sup>

'O (river) Vaiyai, let us sing of your beneficence and obtain relief (from grief) and be filled with secure feeling.'

**piriyātu irukka em cuṛṛamōṭu uṭaṇē** (pari.18:56)[**iru** 'to remain, continue to be'; **irukka** plural]

'May we continue to be together with our kin without departing from them.'

(bare stem + **ka**)**keṭuka niṇ avalam** (peru:38)[**keṭu** 'to perish'; **keṭuka** singular]

'May your agony perish.'

<sup>10</sup> The commentator Parimēlaḷakar says that since **ēmākka** denotes a wish it is in the first person. The implication seems to be that **ēmākka** would be a command if it was used in the second person or vice versa.

maṇai keḷu penṭu yāṇ ākuka (aka.203:18)

[āku ‘to become’; ākuka singular]

‘May I become the age old woman in (his) household!’

yāvarum varuka ēṇōrum tam (matu:747)

[var ‘to come’; varuka plural]

‘Come on everyone. Bring others too.’

(compound stem + ka)

naṇṇār ... vantu tirai koṭuttu vaṇaṅkiṇar vaḷimolintu cenṛika eṇpa  
āyiṇ (aka.124:1-3)

[cel ‘to go, leave’; cenṛī compound stem; cenṛika singular]

‘if the enemies would come (to his war camp), pay tributes, worship (him), speak submissive words, and say “Please, leave” ...’

**kamā**: It consists of two suffixes, **ka** and **mā**.

(bare stem + kamā)

vāṇam vaṇappiṇum mannukamā taṇ paraṅkuṇṇam niṇakku  
(pari.8:129-130)

[mannu ‘to prevail, last for ever’; mannukamā singular]<sup>11</sup>

‘Even if the sky fails to rain, may the cool (hill) Paraṅkuṇṇu prevail for you.’

pū eḷil uṇkaṇum polikamā iṇiyē (kali.39:51)

[poli ‘to thrive, flourish, prosper’; polikamā plural]

‘Also may your eyes now flourish with the beauty of flowers.’

<sup>11</sup> A traditional commentator takes **mā** as the “optative expletive” (cf. Parimēlaḷaḱar’s commentary on this poem in U.V. Saminathier’s edition 1948:89).

**ku:**(bare stem + **ku**)niṇ kaṇ āku eṇ kaṇ maṇ (kali.39:44)

[ā 'to be'; āku plural]

'May my eyes become yours.'

(Some might prefer to treat āku 'to become' itself as the stem.)

**(u)m:**(bare stem + **(u)m**)vayiriyar k kāṇiṇ ... īm eṇa āṇā k koḷkaiyai (pati.64:8, 10-11)

[ī 'to give, provide'; īm plural]

'You have an unending/unfailing philosophy of commanding (your servants) "Provide (for them), when you see a group of pipers!" '

yāṇ ōm eṇṇavum ollār (aka.26:10)[ō 'to stop, block'; ōm singular]<sup>12</sup>

'Even if I say "Recede," he will not.'

uṇm eṇa tēṭkaṭuppu aṇṇa nāṭpaṭu tēṇal ... īttal aṇṇiyum (pura.392:15-16, 18)

[uṇ 'to eat, consume'; uṇm singular]

'in addition to giving toddy that stings like a scorpion and saying "Drink", ...'

yāvarum varuka ēṇōrum tam (matu:747)

[tar 'to bring'; tam plural]

'Come on everyone. Bring others too.'

---

<sup>12</sup> Note that ōmpu 'to shield, shelter, protect' is derived from ō.

**nīṭaṇmin vārum**

(*pari.14:9*)

[**var** 'to come'; **vārum** plural]

'Come. Do not delay.'

**mati**<sup>13</sup>:

(stem + **mati**)

**collumati pāṇa ... paṇi malar k kaṇṇi kūṛiyatu emakkē**

(*aink.479:1, 5*)

[**col** 'to reveal, tell'; **collu** < **col** + **u** formative suffix;

**collunati** singular]

'O bard, tell us what the woman with eyes like cool fresh flowers spoke of.'

**min**:

(bare stem + **min**)

**uṇmin kaḷḷē aṭumin cōṛē eṛika tiṛri ērrumin pulukkē ... peṛratu**

**utavumin** (*pati:18:1, 2, 7*)

[**uṇ** 'to eat, consume, drink'; **aṭu** 'to kill, cook'; **ērru** 'to raise, put on'; **utavu** 'to help, give'; **uṇmin, aṭumin, ērrumin, utavumin** plural]

'Drink the toddy. Cook the rice. Chop the meat. Raise the things to be steamed onto the stove. Help (others) with what you have (received/obtained).'

---

<sup>13</sup> **nalkumati** 'give' (*tiru:295*) has been interpreted in the tradition as used in the third person: 'He will give.'

ōmpunar allatu uṭarṇunar illai āṅku **viyaṅkoṇmin** atu ataṇ paṇpē  
(*malai:426-427*)

[**viyaṅkoḷ** 'to take up, accept the way'  
< **viyam** 'path, way' + **koḷ** 'to accept, take';  
**viyaṅkoṇmin** plural]

'Only the people who will shelter you will be there, and no one to make you suffer. **Accept/Take** the path (they show you from) there. That is the nature of the forest.'

(compound stem + **min**)

ivaḷ nilaimai **kēṭṭimin** (*kali.25:12*)  
[**kēḷ** 'to listen, hear'; **kēṭṭi** compound stem; **kēṭṭimin** singular]  
'Please hear about her condition.'

**mē:**

(bare stem + **mē**)

pacalaikku maruntu piṇitu iṇmai naṅku aṇintaṇai **cenmē** (*narr.247:8-9*)  
[**cel** 'to go, leave'; **cenmē** singular]  
'Leave (if you want) after knowing that there is no other medicine except you for (her) lovesick pallor.'

(bare stem + **min** + **mē**)

kaṇṭu **paṇiminmē** (*pari.15:34*)  
[**paṇi** 'to bow in worship'; **paṇiminmē** plural]  
'Look at (the hill Paraṅkuṇru) and **bow in worship**.'  
(Notice the stack of two suffixes, **min** and **mē**.)

**mō:**

(bare stem + **mō**)

iṇru varal **uraimō cenṇiṇiṇōr tiṇattu** (*aka.34:15*)  
[**urai** 'to state/speak'; **uraimō** singular]  
'About the man who has gone away, **speak** of his arrival today.'

tōḷi nām **cenmō**

(aka.32:17)

[**cel** 'to leave'; **cenmō** plural]

'My friend, **let us go.**'

(Note that the subject **nām** 'we' is in the first person plural which includes the listener[s].)

**cenmō** peruma em viḷavu uṭai nāṭṭu eṇa yām taṇ aṟiyunam āka

(pura.381:5-6)

[**cel** 'to go, leave'; **cenmō** plural]

'We informed him "O great one, let us go to our festive country" and ...'

(Note that the subject **yām** 'we' is in the first person plural which excludes the listener[s].)

(compound stem + **mō**)

celkam cela **viyaṅkoṇmō**

(kuru.114:3)

[**viyaṅkol** 'to take up, accept the way'

< **viyam** 'path, way' + **kol** 'to accept, take';

**viyaṅkoṇmō** singular]

'We shall leave. **Accept** our leaving'

'We shall leave. **Bid us farewell.**'

aṟam **ceyṭimō**

(pura.145:7)

[**cey** 'to do'; **ceyṭi** compound stem; **ceyṭimō** singular]

'**Please do** your duty (of righteousness).'

Formation mechanism: extension

using a non-past/non-completive personal verb  
using a verbal noun in **al** or **(t)tal**

## Personal Verb

(1st person singular)

**piṛar vaṇ pulam kāvaliṇ māṛi yāṇ piṛakkē** (pura.71:18-19)  
[**piṛa** ‘to be born’; **piṛakku** ‘I will be born’;  
**piṛakkē** < **piṛakku** + **ē** particle]  
**piṛakku** < **piṛakk** non-past/non-completive stem + **u** PNG]  
‘May I be displaced and born for protecting the harsh lands of others.’

(1st person inclusive plural)

**ayarntikam viruntē** (kali.32:19)  
[**ayar** ‘to celebrate’; **ayarnti** compound stem; **ayarntikam** plural]  
‘Let us celebrate and give to the unknown (guests).’

(2nd person honorific/plural)

**paṭai iṭuvāṇ maṇ kaṇṭir kāmaṇ maṭai aṭum pāloṭu kōṭṭam pukiṇ**  
(kali.109:19-20)  
[**kāṇ** ‘to see’; **kaṇṭir** ‘you see/know’ < **kaṇṭ** + **ir** PNG]  
‘If she goes with the offering of milk into his shrine, Kāmaṇ (the love-god) will put down his weapons, you (will) see.’



## Verbal Noun

*Suffix      Structure and Example***al:**

(bare stem + glide + al)

peruṇ kural ēṇal kāval iṇi eṇṇōlē (narr.389:6-7)

[kā 'to protect'; kāval 'guarding' &lt; kā + glide v + al]

'Now, may there be guarding of the millet with big sheaves.'

'Now, you guard the millet with big sheaves.'

**(t)tal:**

(bare stem + ttal)

aravai āyiṇ niṇatu eṇa t tiṇattal maṇavai āyiṇ pōroṭu tiṇattal

(pura.44:11-12)

[tiṇa 'to open'; tiṇattal 'opening' &lt; tiṇa + ttal]

'If you are a man of virtues, open (your fortress) saying, "It is yours." If you are a man of valor, open (your fortress) for war.'

(As an imperative, tiṇattal can be interpreted as 'may there be an opening.')

(bare stem + tal)

poruḷ tiṇattu avavu k kai viṭutal (kali.14:18-19)

[viṭu 'to let go; let loose'; viṭutal 'letting ... go' &lt; viṭu + tal]

'Let go your hands of desire concerning wealth.'

'Take away your hands of desire from wealth.'

(As an imperative, viṭutal can be interpreted as 'may there be abandoning.')

Formation mechanism: periphrasisinfinitive + **vēṇṭum**verbal noun ending with **al/kal/(t)tal + vēṇṭum***Structure and Example*(infinitive + **vēṇṭum**)**vaḷara vēṇṭum avaḷē***(pura.339:11)*[**vaḷar** 'to grow'; **vaḷara** < **vaḷar** + **a**]'She **must grow up**, indeed.'**viḷaviṛ celliyar vēṇṭum***(narr.390:6)*[**cel** 'to go'; **cel** + **iyar**]'I **must go** to the festival.'(verbal noun + **vēṇṭum**)**niṇ vayiṇ cēri cērā varuvōrkku eṇṇum aruḷal vēṇṭum** *(narr.342:3-5)*[**aruḷ** 'to be compassionate, be gracious'; **aruḷal** 'being compassionate/gracious']'You **must** always **be gracious** toward people who come to you in your neighborhood.'**uritiṇiṇ koṇṭu āṅku p peyartal vēṇṭum***(aka.10:7-8)*[**peyar** 'to move away'; **peyartal** 'moving away']'You **must** take her due to your rights and **move** there (to your village).'

'You must take her because of your right and go (to your village).'

## THE NEGATIVE IMPERATIVE/OPTATIVE

(“do not \_\_” / “may \_\_ not \_\_”)

**GENERAL:** See “The Imperative/Optative.”

**FORMATION:** The negative imperative/optative notion is expressed in the following ways.

(i) by suffixation:

- (a) adding **al**, **ā(t)**, **āl**, **i**, **il**, or **ēl** to the verb stem (if the verb is not intrinsically negative), sometimes followed by certain imperative/optative suffixes; in some situations, **āt** is followed by a second stem and then an imperative/optative suffix;
- (b) adding **iyar(ō)** to the intrinsically negative verb stem **il**;
- (c) adding **al** to a non-past/non-completive stem ending with **(k)k** and followed by an imperative/optative suffix;

(ii) by extension:

using a negative personal verb or participial noun;

(iii) by periphrasis:

a verbal noun ending with **al** or an infinitive in **a** or **kka** is followed by the word **vēṇṭā** 'is not necessary.'

The negative imperative/optative suffixes are: **iyar(ō)**, **īr**, **m**, **mē**, **mō**, **ka**, and **min**. They are shared by the singular and the plural. Most of these suffixes occur in affirmative forms also.

### EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: suffixation

bare stem + **al/āl** ± **ka/min**

non-past/non-completive stem + **al** + **īr**

stem + **āt** + stem<sub>2</sub> + **m(ē)/mō**

negative verb stem **il** + **iyar(ō)**

bare stem ± **ēl** + **ka**

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**(ā)al**: The negative imperative/optative form with **al** could be considered as an extended usage of the negative verbal noun in **al**. The suffix **āl** is a variant of **al**.

(bare stem + **al**)

nilam peyarinūm niṇ col **peyaral**

(*pura.3:14*)

[**peyar** 'to swerve, shake'; **peyaral** singular]

'Even if the earth shakes, **may** you **not** swerve in your words.'

mārpakam porunti muyaṅkal **viṭāal** ivai eṇa ... ivai pārāṭṭiya  
paruvamum uḷa (aka.26:8, 9,11)

[**viṭu** 'to let go'; **viṭāal** singular]

'There were even times when he joined his chest to my breasts,  
which he praised saying "**Do not let them go** without embracing  
me." '

karumpu amanṇa tōḷārai k kāṇiṇ **viṭāal** (kali.112:6-7)

[**viṭu** 'to let go'; **viṭāal** singular]

'If you see women with sugar canes (painted) on their shoulders,  
**do not let them go away.**'

(bare stem + āl)

ūra **poyyāl** arivenṇiṇ māyam (aka.256:7-8)

[**poy** 'to lie'; **poyyāl** singular]

'O Ūra, **do not lie**. I know about your illusive nature.'

i:

(bare stem + āt + i)

**varuntāti** (kali.107:30)

[**varuntu** 'to grieve, be sad']

'**Do not grieve.**'

iyar(ō):

(negative verb **il** + **iyar**)

nāṭorum pāṭēṇ āyiṇ ... vaḷuti kaṇmāru **iliyar** eṇ perum kiḷai p puravē  
(pura.388:13, 15-16)

[**kaṇmāru** 'compassion'; **il** 'to be absent, not to exist'; **iliyar** singular]

'If I do not sing of him every day, **may** Vaḷuti **not have** the compassion  
of protecting my big clan.'

(Note that the stem **il** is intrinsically negative.)

(bare stem + **al** + **iyarō**)

nī keṭāa nal icai nilaii t **tavāaliyarō** iv ulakamōṭu uṭaṇē  
(*pati.14:20-22*)

[**tav(u)** < **tapu** 'to perish'; **tavāaliyarō** singular]

'May you together with this world **never perish**, making your good reputation prevail.'

(bare stem + **il** + **iyarō**)

niṇ pāṭu makaḷ kāṇiyar **kāṇiliyarō** niṇ pukaḷnta yākkai ... kāṭe  
(*pati.44:7-8, 23*)

[**kāṇ** 'to see'; **kāṇiliyarō** singular]

'May the singing women see your body. May the forest (where corpses are buried) **not see** your body which was praised (by the singers).'

**īr:**(non-past/non-completive stem in **k** + **al** + **īr**)

ceṇṇu **toḷukallīr** kaṇṭu paṇimiṇmē (*pari.15:34*)

[**toḷu** 'to worship']

'(When you go to Paraṅkuṇṇu) **do not** (just) go and worship (Murukaṇ). Look (at the hill) and bow.'

**ēl:**(bare stem + **ēl**)

āḷēl eṇṇi tōḷi (*aka.97:15*)

[**aḷu** 'to cry; be depressed'; **āḷēl** singular < **aḷu** + **ēl**]

'My friend, you are telling me "**Do not cry / be depressed.**" '

**ai:**(bare stem + **al** + **ai**)

poruntalai pūṭṭaṇaḷ nīṅku (*pari.16:23-24*)

[**poruntu** 'to join, unite']

**‘May you not join (her). She has bloomed. Go away.’**  
 (‘She has bloomed’ means ‘She is menstruating.’)

**ka:**

(bare stem + **al** + **ka**)

avaṇ uṛai muṇaii **vāraṛka** tilla tōḷi ... eṇ neṇcē (*aka.40:11-12, 17*)  
 [var ‘to come’; **vāraṛka** singular]  
 ‘Friend, **may** my heart **not come** (back) hating its stay (over) there.’

aviyum pularāmai **marāaṛka** vāṇam (*pari.16:53, 54*)  
 [maru ‘to refuse’; **marā** ‘to forget’; **marāaṛka** singular]  
 ‘**May** the sky **not refuse/forget** (to rain) so that the offering to you does not dry out.’  
 (The form **marāaṛka** is ambiguous. It could be from the stem **maru** ‘to refuse’ or from **marā** ‘to forget.’)

(bare stem + **ēl** + **ka**)

cintikka t tīrum piṇiyāl **cērēṛka** (*pari.20:68*)  
 [ceru ‘to hate’; **cērēṛka** singular]  
 ‘**Do not hate** the woman, (just by) thinking of whom your sickness will be cured.’  
 ‘Do not hate the woman who could cure your sickness.’  
 (Note the lengthening of e in the first syllable when deriving **cērēṛka**. Cf. 5.6 in “Morphophonemics.”)

**m:**

(bare stem + **āt** + stem<sub>2</sub> **ī** + **m**)

ellinru tōṇral **cellātīm** (*aka.300:18*)  
 [cel ‘to leave’; **cellātīm** singular]  
 ‘It has darkened. **Do not leave**, O noble One.’

**min:**(bare stem + al + **min**)aiyam **koḷḷanmin** āraṇivālīr (pura.216:5)[koḷ 'to have, accept'; **koḷḷanmin** plural]'O, people full of knowledge, **do not have doubts.**'kāmam muṇaiiyāl alantāl eṇṇu eṇai k kāṇa **nakānmin**

(kali.145:11-12)

[naku 'to laugh at'; **nakānmin** plural]

'Do not look and laugh at me saying, "She is immersed in passion. She is distressed." '

**mē:** The ē could be considered as a particle.(bare stem + āt + stem, ī + **mē**)niṇ makal ... pacalai kāma nōy eṇa c **ceppātīmē** (aka.52:13, 14-15)[ceppu 'to tell, reply'; **ceppātīmē** singular]

'Please do not tell/say, "Your daughter's paleness is (due to her) sickness of passion." '

**mō:** The ō could be considered as a particle.(bare stem + āt + stem, ī + **mō**)**aḷātīmō** notumalar talaiyē (narr.13:2)[aḷu 'to cry'; **aḷātīmō** singular]

'Please do not cry in (this) place of strangers.'



**Formation mechanism:** extension; using a negative participial noun

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**mār:** (3rd person human plural)

(bare stem + **al** + **mār**)

maḱaḷir neyṭal **kēḷaṇmār** neṭuṇkaṭaiyāṇē (*pura.389:16-17*)

[**kēḷ** ‘to hear’]

‘May the women in your large courtyard be those who never hear the (sound of the) neyṭal drum (that announces death).’

‘May the women in your large courtyard never hear the (sound of the) neyṭal drum (that announces death).’

**Formation mechanism:** infinitive or verbal noun + **vēṇṭā**

*Structure and Example*

(infinitive + **vēṇṭā**)

neṇcam **varunta vēṇṭā** (*pura.101:9-10*)

[**varuntu** ‘to grieve, be sad’; **varunta vēṇṭā** singular]

‘O my heart, you need not / do not grieve’

iravala ... viṇaku oy māḱkaḷ poṇ perrannatōr talaippātu aṇru avan

īkai **ninaikka vēṇṭā** (*pura.70:5, 17-19*)

[**ninaḷ** ‘to think’; **ninaikka vēṇṭā** singular]

‘O suppliant, do not think about his (act of) giving. It is not a (matter of) chance like people getting gold while they carry (loads

of) firewood (from the forest).'<sup>1</sup>

(**ninaikka vēṇṭā** could also be interpreted to mean 'need not think.')

(verbal noun + **vēṇṭā**)

**ennatūum pariyal vēṇṭā**

(*pura.172:4-5*)

[**pari** 'to be concerned, worry'; **pariyal vēṇṭā** plural]

'You need not be concerned about anything.'

'Do not be concerned about anything.'

---

<sup>1</sup> The verb **oy** in **viṇaku oy mākkal** is translated here as 'carry.' Cf. **tūtu oy pārppāṇ** 'the brahmin who carries a message (as an envoy)' (*aka.337:7*).

## THE POTENTIAL

**GENERAL:** The potential expresses the notion of possibility. See “A Note On Mood.”

**FORMATION:** By periphrasis.

- a) a participial noun, verbal noun, or finite verb is followed by **ām** ‘it will be’<sup>1</sup>;
- b) an infinitive, a verbal noun, or finite verb is followed by verbs that provide the senses ‘to be appropriate/proper, be possible, to endure, to fit, to last.’ The verbs found in such contexts are **iyai**, **ol**, **kūtu**, and **cel**, all of which share the sense ‘to be possible, endure, last.’

---

<sup>1</sup> Some might consider **ām** as derived from **ākum** (< **āku** + **um**). Note that in some analyses of modern Tamil, the Potential is explained as adding **alām** to the infinitive stem. Cf. Hart and Hart (1979:94).

The negative sense of the potential, 'not possible, not proper', is expressed by negating the verbs *ā*, *iyai*, *ol*, *kūtu*, and *cel*.

### EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: periphrasis

#### *Structure and Example*

(infinitive + *ā*)

mālai p poḷutil nal akam nayantu tāṇ uyāṅki c collavum ākātu  
aḥkiyōṇē (kuru.346:6-8)

[*ā* 'to be'; **collavum**

< **colla** (infinitive of **col** 'to tell') + glide **v** + **um** particle]

'Wishing for my good chest in the evening, he was distressed and, **not being able to tell** (me about it), was distressed.'<sup>2</sup>

(Note that **ākātu** 'without being possible' is negative.)

(verbal noun + *ā*)

koṭicci kaiyakattatuvē piṛar viṭuttarḱu ākātu piṇitta eṇ neñcē  
(narr.95:9-10)

[*ā* 'to be'; **viṭuttarḱu** < **viṭuttal** 'freeing';

**viṭuttal** < **viṭu** 'to free; let go' + **ku**]

'**Not being able to be freed** by others, my heart is in the hands of the Koṭicci who grabbed it.'

(Note that **ākātu** is negative.)

<sup>2</sup> (kali.47:19-21) Some may interpret **nal akam nayantu** to mean 'wishing something in his good heart.'

(finite verb + ām)

ven cuḷi p paṭṭa makar̥ku k karai niṇṇār añcal enṇālum uyirppu  
**uṇṭām** (kali.140:25-26)

[**uṇṭām** < **uṇṭu** (< **uḷ** ‘to exist’) + **ām**; **uyirppu** ‘breathing’]

‘For a man who is caught in a whirlpool, survival **exists** / **is possible** even if people who are standing on the shore say, “Do not be afraid.”’

(It is possible to consider this example [and the next] to be a “reported form of speech” lending the interpretation ‘It seems that ... .’)

(finite verb + ām)

uyir cekukkum pāmpum avai p paṭil **uyyumām** (kali.140:21-22)

[**uy** ‘to survive, escape’; **uyyumām** < **uyyum** ‘it will survive’ + **ām**]

‘**There will be survival** even if a snake which kills/destroys life happens to be in an assembly.’

(It is more appropriate to construe **uyyumām** as derived from **uy** ‘escape’ [verbal noun] + **um** ‘also’ + **ām**.)

(verbal noun + ām)

in nōy **porukkal ām** varaittu anṇi p peritu āyiṇ (kali.58:20-21)

[**poru** ‘to bear with, tolerate’; **porukkal** ‘tolerance’]

‘if this (love)sickness is not within **bearable** limits, and grows big, ...’

(Note that **ām** here is an adjectival participle.)

(infinitive + iyai)

neñcu aḷi tuyar aṭa **niruppavum iyaiyum** maṇ ... naṭuṅku añar  
 kaṇaviṇṇaṇ aḷivurru kaṅkulum āṇṇā k kāl (kali.53:17, 18-19)

[**nīru** 'to make stay, stop';

**nīruppavum** < **nīruppa** + glide **v** + **um** emphatic particle]

'It will be possible, indeed, to make her life stay, while grief destroys her heart, if she is not (already) destroyed by her dream (about you) at night and does not tremble and agonize.'

(verbal noun + **ol**)

paṇi ivaḷ paṭar eṇa p **paravāmai** **ollum** maṇ (kali.53:13)

[**paravu** 'to spread'; **paravāmai** (negative verbal noun) 'non-spreading']

'It will be possible that trembling does not spread like her grief.'

vāṇutal pulampa p pati peyarntu **uraital** **ollumō** numakkē

(aka.179:13-14)

[**urai** 'to stay'; **uraital** 'staying']

'While she with bright forehead grieves alone, will it be possible for you to go away from our town and stay (there)?'

(Note that the subject of **ol** is in the dative **numakku** 'for you.')

avaṇai nāṇ aṭa p **peyarttal** namakkum āṅku **ollātu** pēṇiṇar

eṇappaṭutal peṇmaiyum aṇṇu (kali.47:19-21)

[**peyar** 'to move'; **peyarttal** 'moving, making ... go']

'It is not possible for us to remove him as (our) bashfulness kills us. Neither would it be womanly to be criticized because we cared for (him).'

(Note that the subject of **ol** is in the dative **namakku** 'for us.' Also note that **ollātu** is negative.)

(verbal noun + **kūṭu**)

cēkkai iniyār pāl celvāṇ maṇaiyālāl kākkai kaṭintu **oḷukal kūṭumō**  
**kūṭā** (pari.20:86-87)

[**oḷuku** ‘to behave, conduct oneself, live’]

‘Is it possible for the wife of a man, who goes after women who are pleasant to be with in bed, to protect him or to live by renouncing him? Not possible.’

(Note that **kūṭum** is positive and **kūṭā** is negative. Also note that the “subject” of **oḷuku** is in the instrumental **maṇaiyālāl** ‘by the wife.’ Compare modern Tamil **avaḷāl vāla muṭiyumā** ‘Can she live?’)

malai uṛai kuṛavaṇ kātal maṭamakaḷ peṛal arum kuraiyaḷ arum kaṭi k  
**kāppinaḷ ... aṇaiyōḷ uḷḷal kūṭātu** (narr.20:1-2, 3-4)

[**uḷḷu** ‘to think of’]

‘The dear daughter of the man living on the mountain is difficult to be obtained; she has a strong protection. You must not think of her.’

(Note that **kūṭātu** is negative and gives the sense ‘is not proper.’ In modern Tamil, it is understood as a “prohibitive” with the sense ‘should not.’)

(verbal noun + **cel**)

ampoṭu kāṭṭu māṇ aṭi vaḷi orri vēṭṭam cellumō num iṛai  
 (aka.388:24-26)

[**vēṭṭam** ‘hunting’ < **vēṭṭ** + **am** verbal noun suffix;

**vēṭṭ** mutated stem < **vēḷ** ‘to wish for’]

‘With an arrow in his hand, would your deity go hunting following the foot path of the jungle animal?’

am malai eṭukkal cellātu uḷappavaṇ pōla (kali.38:4-5)  
 [eṭu ‘to take, lift’; eṭukkal ‘lifting’]  
 ‘like the one who is not able to lift that mountain’

peruṇ kaḷiru uḷuvai aṭṭeṇa irum piṭi uyaṅku piṇi varuttamoṭu iyaṅkal  
 cellātu ... kuḷavi taḷī ... varunti vaikum kāṇaka nāṭaṇ  
 (narr.47:1-2, 4, 5-6)

[iyaṅku ‘to move around’; iyaṅkal ‘moving’]  
 ‘the man from the country, where the dark big female elephant  
 stays sadly caressing its calf in the forest, **unable to move around**  
 because of agonizing distress after a tiger killed its big male elephant’



## THE INTERROGATIVE

**GENERAL:** Two types of the interrogative mood are expressed in classical Tamil. One kind anticipates a reply, and the other is rhetorical and does not anticipate an answer, but makes or seeks a suggestion such as ‘Shall we \_\_?’, ‘Why don’t you \_\_?’, ‘Wouldn’t you \_\_?’, etc. There are certain pronominal forms which belong to the first kind of the interrogative and are given in “The Pronouns.” A few examples of the pronominal forms are given below besides the second kind, the rhetorical.

**FORMATION:** The pronominal interrogative is expressed by certain words which begin with **e** or **yā**. These words precede or follow the word they modify. In most cases, there is no other interrogative marker in the rest of the sentence. If any, the particle **ō** occurs at the end of the sentence to imply a rhetorical sense.

The rhetorical question is expressed by suffixation:

- a) by adding **ē** to a finite form of the negative verb **al** ‘not to be X’;

- b) by adding *ā* or *ō* to a finite form of a verb, affirmative or negative.

### EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: using a pronominal form

<i>Pronominal Form</i>	<i>Example</i>
------------------------	----------------

**evan:**

kēṭṭāl **evan** ceyya vēṇṭumō ... avan kaṇṇi anrō atu (*kali.107:13, 14*)

[**evan** 'what']

'If (mother) asks/hears (about it) **what** should we do? Is it not his garland (that we have)?'

**yār:**

ivar yār

(*puṛa.201:1*)

[**yār** 'who?']

'Who are these people?'

Formation mechanism: suffixation

finite form of **a**l + *ē*

personal verb + *ā/ō*

<i>Suffix</i>	<i>Structure and Example</i>
---------------	------------------------------

**ā**: It is not commonly used in classical Tamil. There is only one instance of it.

(personal verb + *ā*)

tantai iraittoṭi ... ivan taṇ kai k kaṇ tantāriyār ... taṇ nalam pāṭuvi

**tantāḷā**

(*kali.84:31-32, 34*)

[**tantāḷā** < **tantāḷ** ‘she gave’ + **ā**]

‘Who gave his father’s bracelet in his hand? **Did the woman** (his father’s concubine) who sings her own praise **give it?**’

**ē**: See “The Particles” for other uses of **ē**.

(negative personal verb + **ē**)

venrōy ninṇinum **nallan anrē** ... vaṭakkiruntōṇē (*pura.66:5, 8*)

[**nallan** ‘good man’ < **nal** ‘good’ + **an** PNG;

**anrē** ‘is it not?’ < **al** + **t** past/completive marker’ + **tu** PNG + **ē**]<sup>1</sup>

‘O you who defeated (him), (tell me), is he, who is sitting down facing the north, **not** a better person than you?’

(Note that the two PNG suffixes **an** [in **nallan**] and **tu** [in **anru**] do not agree. **anru** serves as an interrogative for the whole statement ninṇinum **nallan** ‘He is a better person than you’, not just the word **nallan**.)

**ō**: It is the most commonly used interrogative particle in this period. See “The Particles” for other uses of **ō**.

(personal verb + **ō**)

mālai uḷḷinen **allanō** yāṇē ... iniyōḷ ... paṭar poḷutu eṇavē

(*narr.3:6-7, 8, 9*)

[**uḷḷinen** ‘I remembered’ < **uḷ(ḷu)** ‘to remember, contemplate’;

**allanō** ‘did I not?’ < **al** ‘not to be \_\_’ + **an** PNG + **ō**]

‘**Did I not think** one evening (when I was away) that “This is the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. modern Tamil *illaiyā*? The word **vaṭakkiruntōṇ** ‘one who is sitting facing the north’ refers to the person following the ancient Tamil ritual which involved being seated facing the north and fasting until death.

time when (my) sweet woman would suffer (without me)?" ' ,

neṭuñkoṭi nuṭaṅkum nāvāy tōṇruva kāṇāmō (aka.110:18-19)

[kāṇāmō 'Do we not see?' < kāṇ 'to see' + ām PNG + ō]

'Don't we see the ships on which tall flags sway?'

tuñcāyō eṇ kuṇumakaḷ (narr.61:5)

[tuñcāyō 'Won't you sleep?' < tuñcu 'to sleep' + āy PNG + ō]

'Won't you sleep, my little girl?'

'Why don't you sleep, my little girl?'

vārāyō (aka.219:3)

[vārāyō 'Won't you come?' < var 'to come' + āy PNG + ō]

'Won't you come (to me)?'

## THE NEGATIVE **al** AND **il**

GENERAL: The negative mood in classical Tamil is expressed in two ways: by suffixing a negative marker (**ā**, **āt**, **al**, or **il**) to a verb stem and by using in a periphrastic construction either of the two intrinsically negative verbs **al** 'not to be X' and **il** 'to be non-existent' in a conjugated form. The **al** can be thought of as an "attributive" negative and the **il** an "existential" negative.<sup>1</sup> Both **al** and **il** are used to negate affirmative nominals and verbals. Contextual significations of these verbs are: **al** 'to exclude/discount X' and **il** 'not to have X.' The **al** is also used to provide uniqueness to an action or noun by placing a condition on an action (with the sense 'unless, without') or by excluding a noun from others (with the sense 'except'). When a conjugated form of **al** follows a negative finite verb, the double negative provides an affirmative sense.

See "The Negative Infinitive," "Negative Personal Verbs," "The Negative Adjectival Participle," "The Negative Adverbial Participle," "Negative Participial Nouns," "Negative Verbal Nouns," and "The Negative

---

<sup>1</sup> These terms were suggested by George Hart.

Imperative/Optative” for information on the negation indicated by appending a negative marker (**ā**, **āt**, **al**, or **il**) to a verb stem. Conjugated forms of **al** and **il** are treated below in this chapter.

**FORMATION:** The negation of nominals and verbals is achieved through periphrasis, as is the double negative:

- a) a nominal or a verbal is followed by a conjugated form of **al**;
- b) a nominal is followed by **al(l)atu/allatai/allāl** ‘except’;
- c) a conditional is followed by **allatu/allāl** ‘except, if not’;
- d) a nominal is followed by a conjugated form of **il**.

It is worth noting that the PNG suffixes at the end of the finite form of **al** or **il** do not always agree with those at the end of the finite verbs they follow and modify. See the examples.

### EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: suffixation

nominal + **al** \_\_  
 personal verb + **al** \_\_  
 nominal + **al(l)atu/allatai/allāl**  
 conditional + **allatu/allāl**  
 nominal + **il** \_\_

### *Structure and Example*

(nominal + **al** \_\_): Translates as: ‘I/We/You/He/She/They/It is/are not X’,  
 where “X” represents the nominal preceding **al**.

avaṇ kaḷvaṇ kaḷvi nān allēn (pari.20:82)  
 [kaḷvi ‘thief (feminine)’; allēn ‘I am not’]  
 ‘He is the thief. I am not the thief.’

yām avan̄ kiḷaiñarēm allēm (pura.144:10)  
 [kiḷaiñarēm ‘we, the kin’; allēm ‘we are not’]  
 ‘We are not his kin.’

pētai allai (aka.7:6)  
 [pētai ‘innocent/naive person’; allai ‘you are not’]  
 ‘You are not a naive person.’

naḷi peyal naṭu nāl̄ ... kal aṭar c ciṟu neṟi ... eḥku tuṇai āka vantōṇ  
 koṭiyaṇum allan̄ tanta nī tavaṟu uṭaiyaiyum allai (aka.72:2, 17, 18-20)  
 [koṭiyaṇ ‘cruel/wicked man’; allan̄ ‘he is not’; tavaṟu ‘fault’;  
 uṭaiyai ‘you have’; allai ‘you are not’]  
 ‘He, who came with his spear as his help through the small stony  
 path at midnight when it rained hard, is not a wicked man. Neither  
 are you at fault who brought him (for a rendezvous with me).’

natturaṇtōr aṟavar allar avar (aka.85:3-4)  
 [aṟavar ‘righteous man’; allar ‘he is not’]  
 ‘He renounced us. He is not a righteous man.’

ivaḷtān varunta nōy ceytu iṟappiṇ allāl maruntu allaḷ (kali.109:21)  
 [maruntu ‘medicine, cure’; allaḷ ‘she is not’]  
 ‘She would give lovesickness and leave; but would not be a cure.’

puraiyar allōr varaiyalaḷ ival (pura.343:12)  
 [puraiyar ‘those who are equals’; allōr ‘they are not’]  
 ‘She will not choose (to marry) those who do not match her.’  
 ‘She will not choose (to marry) those who do not measure up to  
 her.’

**kār anru** ikuḷai tīrka niṇ paṭarē (*kuru.251:4*)  
 [**kār** 'rainy season'; **anru** 'it is not']  
 'Friend, **this is not the rainy season**. Get rid of your agony.'

pāṇāl kaṅkulum **ariya alla** maṇ ... ic curam aṭitalum aṭirō enṇunarp  
 perinē (*aka.8:4, 5, 17-18*)  
 [**ariya** 'difficult things'; **alla** 'they are not']  
 'Even midnight is **not difficult** for us (to come for a rendezvous) if  
 we find/have someone who would ask "Do you really know this  
 jungle?"'

(participial noun + **al**\_\_)

**ceṇru niṭunar allar** (*aka.375:1*)  
 [**niṭunar** 'one who will extend/delay'; **allar** 'he is not']  
 'He **will not delay**, having gone (in search of wealth).'  
 (Note that **niṭunar** is a non-past/non-completive participial noun.)

(personal verb + **al**\_\_): Translates as 'I/We/You/He/She/They/It  
 did/do/does/will not X', where "X" is the  
 personal verb.

**uṇarkuven allan** uraiyal niṇ māyam (*aka.226:1*)  
 [**uṇarkuven** 'I will understand'; **allan** 'I am not']  
 'Do not tell me (about) your illusive acts/deeds. **I do not understand**.'

mārpū tarukallāy piṇaṇ āyiṇaiyē iṇi yāṇ **viṭukkuven allēn**  
(*aka.396:10-11*)  
 [**viṭukkuven** 'I will let go'; **allēn** 'I am not']  
 'You do not give me your chest (anymore). You have become  
 someone else. **I will not let (you) go now**.'



**uṭalinēn allēn** poyyātu uraimō yār avaḷ maḱiḷna (*aink.66:1, 2*)  
 [**uṭalinēn** ‘I am agitated’; **allēn** ‘I am not’]  
 ‘I am not agitated. Tell me without lying. O Maḱiḷna (man of pleasure), who is she?’

nāḷai ... matil kaṭantallatu **uṇkuvam allēm** pukā (*pati.58:5, 6-7*)  
 [**uṇkuvam** ‘we will eat’; **allēm** ‘we are not’]  
 ‘Tomorrow, we will not eat food unless we cross over the fortress (of our enemies).’

**varuvai allai** vāṭai naṇi koṭitē (*aink.233:1*)  
 [**varuvai** ‘you will come’; **allai** ‘you are not’]  
 ‘Do not come. The cold wind is much severe.’

poruḷ vayiṇ celiṇē **niṭṭuvir allirō** neṭuntakaiyīr (*aka.239:11-12*)  
 [**niṭṭuvir** ‘you will extend’; **allir** ‘you are not’]  
 ‘O, man of great qualities, if you go seeking wealth, will you not extend (your stay)?’  
 (The particle **ō** at the end of **allir** provides an interrogative sense.)

**turakkuvan allan turakkuvan allan** toṭar varai verpaṇ **turakkuvan allan** (*kali.41:35-36*)  
 [**turakkuvan** ‘he will renounce’; **allan** ‘he is not’]  
 ‘He will not renounce (you). He will not renounce (you). The Verpaṇ from the mountainous range will not renounce (you).’

vaṇaṅkārkku **īkuvan allan** (*pura.338:9*)  
 [**īkuvan** ‘he will give’; **allan** ‘he is not’]  
 ‘He will not give (his daughter in marriage) to those who will not submit to him.’

maṭa nallār muyakkattai niṇ mārpīṇ pūṇiṇāl kuṛi koṇṭāl **pulakkuvaḷ**  
**allaḷō** (kali.79:13-14)

[**pulakkuvaḷ** 'she will sulk'; **allaḷ** 'she is not'; **ō** particle]

'She inferred your rendezvous with innocent women and their embrace from the (marks of) jewelry on your chest. **Won't she sulk with you?**'

oru nāl viḷumam uṇiṇum vaḷināl **vāḷkuvaḷ** **allaḷ** eṇ tōḷi (aka.18:9-10)  
 [**vāḷkuvaḷ** 'she will live'; **allaḷ** 'she is not']

'If there is danger (to you) even for a day, my friend **will not live the next day.**'

nap-pulantu aṭṭilōḷē am mā arivai emakkē varuka til viruntē **civappāl**  
**anru** (narr.120:8-10)

[**civappāl** 'she will turn red with anger'; **anru** 'it is not']

'The beautiful dark young woman is in the cooking place (kitchen), sulking with me. May guests come for us. **She will not be red with anger (then).**'

(Note that **civappāl** and **anru** do not agree in PNG. If there is such agreement, it will be **civappāl allaḷ**.)

vaḷaṅkā p poḷutu nī kaṇru mēyppāy pōl vaḷaṅkal aṛivār uraiyārēl  
 emmai **ikaḷntārē anrō** emar (kali.112:12-14)

[**ikaḷntār** 'they despised'; **anrō** < **anru** 'it is not' + **ō** particle, rhetorical sense]

'Knowing that you move around on the pretext of grazing the calves at a time when no one moves around, if my kith and kin do not tell (me about it), **haven't they despised us (hon.)?**'

(Note that **ikaḷntār** and **anrō** do not agree in PNG. If there is such agreement, it will be **ikaḷntārē allarō**.)

**uyntaṇar allar ivaṇ uṭarriyōrē** (*puṛa.100:9*)  
 [uyntaṇar ‘they escaped/survived’; allar ‘they are not’]  
 ‘Those who (have) aggravated him **will not survive.**’

**celvār allar eṇru yāṇ ikaṭṭaṇaṇē olvāḷ allaḷ eṇru avar ikaṭṭaṇaṇē** (*kuṛu.43:1-2*)  
 [celvār ‘they will go’; olvāḷ ‘she will agree’; allar ‘They are not’;  
 allaḷ ‘she is not’]  
 ‘I neglected (to stop him) thinking that **he will not go.** He neglected  
 (to tell me) thinking “**She will not agree** (to my departure).” ’

(negative personal verb + **al** \_\_): Note that these are the “double negatives.”

**perumpiṛitu inmaiṇiḷ ilēnum allēṇ** (*narr.381:2*)  
 [ilēṇ ‘I do not exist’; allēṇ ‘I am not’; um particle]  
 ‘Since there is no death, **I have not ceased to exist** either.’  
 ‘Since I have not died, (it means that) I have not ceased to exist.’

**iravu k katavam muyaṛal kēḷēm allēm kēṭṭaṇam** (*kuṛu.244:2-3*)  
 [kēḷēm ‘we do not hear’; allēm ‘we are not’]  
 ‘**We are not the ones who did not hear.** We heard.’

**īṇra tāyō vēṇṭāḷ allaḷ** (*puṛa.346:2*)  
 [vēṇṭāḷ ‘she does not want’; allaḷ ‘she is not’]  
 ‘She is not the one who does not want \_\_; She wants \_\_.’  
 ‘The mother who gave birth (to her) is **not someone who does not want** (her).’

iravalar puravalai niyum allai puravalar iravalarkku illaiyum allar  
(*pura.162:1-2*)

[**illai** ‘there is not’; **allar** ‘they are not’;

**illaiyum allar** ‘They are not the ones who do not exist. They exist.’]

‘You are not the protector of the suppliants. The protectors of the suppliants **have not ceased to exist either.**’

(Note that the two PNG, **ai** [in **illai**] and **ar** [in **allar**], do not agree.)

akan naka vārā ... paricil tāl ilālar vēlār allar (*pura.207:4-5*)

[**vēlār** ‘they will not wish for’; **allar** ‘they are not’

**vēlār allar** ‘They are not the ones who do not wish for \_\_’, which means ‘They wish for \_\_.’]

‘Those who are effortless **will not dislike** the gift that is given without delight at heart.’

maṇavar ... nāṭu naṇi cēya celvēm allēm ennār ... varutalum uṇṭu enru ... tuñcā k kaṇṇa vaṭa pulattu aracē

(*pura.31:9, 10-11, 15, 17*)

[**celvēm** ‘we will go’; **allēm** ‘we are not’; **ennār** ‘they do not say/think’]

‘Kings in the northern land have sleepless eyes thinking “(His) warriors **will not say** that the (enemy) country is very far away and (so) **we will not go.** (Therefore), they might come.” ’

(nominal + **a(l)latu**)

**peruntakai allatu** āṭavar kuṇukā arum kaṭi varaippu (*neṭu:106-107*)

[**peruntakai** ‘great one’; referring to the king in this context;

**allatu** ‘except’]

‘the well-guarded difficult boundary (of the queen’s private quarters),  
which **except for the great one** men do not approach’

**anantar naṭukkam allatu** yāvatum maṇam kavalpu iṇṇi māḷāntu  
eḷuntu (*poru*:94-95)

[**naṭukkam** (verbal noun) ‘trembling’; **allatu** ‘except’]<sup>2</sup>

‘waking up overwhelmed, without any worry at heart, **except for the trembling** due to lying down (indefinitely after drinking)’

**niṇṇai p purai niṇaippin nī alatu** uṇartiyō (*pari*.3:46)

[**nī** ‘you’; **alatu** ‘except’]

‘If you think of anything measuring up to you, do you know of anything **except you(rlself)?**’

(conditional + **allatu**)

**parāvaru marapiṇ kaṭavuḷ kāṇiṇ tolānir kaliyiṇ allatu** vaṇitu num  
iyam toṭutal ōmpumin (*malai*:230-232)

[**tolānir** ‘you people who do not worship’;

**kaliyiṇ** ‘if one passes by’; **allatu** ‘unless’]

‘If you see the god who is difficult to worship according to tradition,  
refrain from tapping uselessly on your musical instruments **unless**  
**you would pass by without worshipping.**’

**valavaṇ valpu valittu ūriṇ allatu** muḷ uṇiṇ munnir maṇṭilam āti āṇṇā  
... kaṭum pari (*aka*.104:3-6)

[**valittu** advp < **vali** ‘to pull’;

**ūriṇ** ‘if one rides’ conditional of **ūr** ‘to ride’; **allatu** ‘unless’]

<sup>2</sup> From the contexts where it is used in the anthologies, one is tempted to interpret **anantar** to refer to a “hangover.”

‘fast horses whose pace will be bearable for the ocean-encircled globe **unless** the charioteer **rides** pulling the harness; but not if he uses the whip (of thorns)’

(nominal + **allatai**)

māṇ viṇaikku uṭampu āṇṭu **olintamai allatai** maṭam keḷu neṇcam  
niṇ uḷaiyatuvē (aka.29:21-23)

[**olintamai** (verbal noun) ‘disappearing’; **allatai** ‘except’]

‘**Except** (for the fact) that my body **disappeared** (to go) there for (the sake of) the noble action (of seeking wealth), my heart has (always) been by your side.’

(nominal + **allāl**)

vaiyai taṇ nīr muṇṇi matil porūm **pakai allāl** nērātār pōr muṇṇu  
onṇu aṇiyāta puricai (kali.67:3-5)

[**pakai** (verbal noun) ‘enmity’; **allāl** ‘unless it is; except’]

‘boundary wall which does not know any upsurging of war with enemies **except the enmity** of (the river) Vaiyai which dashes against the fortress with its upsurging water’

(conditional + **allāl**)

niṇ kaṇ **perin allāl** iṇ uyir vāḷkallā eṇkaṇ eṇṇō tavaṇṇu (kali.88:8-9)

[**kaṇ** ‘compassionate look’; **perin** conditional of **peru** ‘to obtain, receive’; **allāl** ‘unless’]

‘What did I do wrong? I cannot live **unless I get/receive** your compassionate look.’

‘What did I do wrong? I cannot live unless you look at me with compassion.’

(nominal + il \_\_): The nominal followed by **il** is the object of **il**.

tōḷum tol kaviṇṇ tolaiya nāḷum pirintōr peyavukku iraṅki maruntu  
piritu iṇmaiṇṇ iruntu **viṇai ilaṇē** (aka.147:12-14)

[**viṇai** ‘task, action’; **ilaṇ** ‘I do not have’]

‘As my shoulders lose their innate fascinating beauty, I continue to exist **without action**, not having any cure (for my lovesickness) but only pining due to the departure of him who left.’

pacittum vārēm **pāramum ilamē** (pura.145:4)

[**pāram** ‘burden’; **ilam** ‘we do not have’]

‘We have not come here starved. **Neither do we have a burden** (of kith and kin to support).’

paṇi paṭu paṇ malai iṇantōrkku muṇitaku paṇpu yām **ceyṭaṇrō ilamē**  
(aka.101:17-18)

[**ceyṭaṇrō** < **ceyṭaṇru** (verbal noun) ‘doing, making’ + **ō**;

**ilam** ‘We do not have’]

‘**We did not do** anything that should cause frustration to him who crossed many foggy mountains.’

vāṭai alaippa t **tuṇai ilēm** tamiyēm pācaṇaiyēmē (narr.341:9-10)

[**tuṇai** ‘support, help’; **ilēm** ‘we (hon.) do not have’]

‘While the cold wind makes us restless, **we are** in the war camp alone **without** our companion.’

nam arulā **nāṇ ili** nāṭṭu malai (kali.42:11-12)

[**nāṇ** ‘shame, bashfulness’; **ili** ‘one who does not have’]

‘the mountain in the country of the **shameless man** who does not show us compassion’

**anpilir** akarir āyīṇ (*narr.37:7*)  
 [**anpu** ‘love, affection’; **ilir** ‘one who does not have’ (2nd person  
 honorific)]  
 ‘if you leave as a **person without love**’

piritu eṇ vayiṇ colla **vallirrum ilanē** (*aka.32:14-15*)  
 [**vallirrum** < **vallirru** (verbal noun) ‘(the act of) being able to’ +  
**um**; **ilan** ‘he does not have’]  
 ‘Neither was he able to tell me anything else.’  
 (Note that **vallirru** is similar to **val[li]yatu**.)

munṇum vantōṇ **maruṅku ilan** inṇum aḷiyaṇ ākalin porunaṇ ivan  
(*pura.391:11-12*)  
 [**maruṅku** ‘side, vicinity’; **ilan** ‘he does not have’]  
 ‘He came (here) before. **He does not have a group** (of kith and  
 kin) **by his side**. He is still pitiful. Therefore he is / must be a  
 porunaṇ (actor).’

kuṇmakal aṇi nalam vauviya **aran ilālan** ariyēṇ eṇṇa tiran il veṇ  
 cūl (*aka.256:16-18*)  
 [**aran** ‘virtue, duty’; **ilālan** ‘man who does not have’]  
 ‘the substanceless cruel oath that he did not know (her), which was  
 made by **the man without virtues** who devoured the small woman’s  
 beautiful loveliness’

ilaiyōḷ **valu ilaḷ** amma tāṇē (*narr.143:5-6*)  
 [**valu** ‘fault, flaw’; **ilaḷ** ‘she does not have’]  
 ‘The young **woman is certainly not at fault**.’

**aruḷ ilar** ... peru varai c ciṇu neṇi varutalāṇē (*narr.261:1, 10*)  
 [**aruḷ** ‘compassion, grace, mercy’; **ilar** ‘he does not have’]



**‘He does not have compassion, because he comes (every day) in the small path through the big (dangerous) mountain.’**

vārātu amaiyalō ilarē nērār nāṭu paṭu naṇ kalam tariiyar nīṭiṇar tōḷi  
(*aink.463:3-5*)

[amaiyal (verbal noun) ‘staying calm/undisturbed’;

ilar ‘he does not have’]

**‘He will not be calm without coming. He delayed in order to bring precious jewels that are in the enemy countries.’**

intirar amiḷtam iyaivatu āyiṇum iṇitu eṇa t tamiyar uṇṭalum ilarē  
munivu ilar tuṇcalum ilar (pura.182:1-4)

[uṇṭal (verbal noun) ‘eating’; munivu ‘hatred, frustration’;

tuṇcal (verbal noun) ‘procrastinating, delaying’;

ilar ‘they do not have’]

**‘Even if they obtain the ambrosia of the gods, they would not eat it alone thinking it is good; they do not have hatred; neither do they procrastinate.’**

eṇaittum uṇarcci illōr uṭaimai uḷḷēm (pura.197:15-16)

[uṇarcci ‘understanding, feeling, emotion’;

illōr ‘people who do not have’]

**‘We will not think about the property of the people who do not have any kind of feelings (for others).’**

akan naka vārā ... paricil tāḷ ilāḷar vēḷār allar (pura.207:4, 5)

[tāḷ ‘effort’; ilāḷar ‘those who do not have’]

**‘Those who make no effort will not dislike the gift that is given without delight at heart.’**

**‘Effortless people will like the gift given even without joy.’**

(Note the double negative: vēḷār allar ‘they will not dislike’)

karantu nām ceytatu **onru illai** (narr.27:5)  
 [**onru** ‘one thing’; **illai** ‘it/there is/was not’]  
 ‘There was nothing that we did hiding.’

emakku **il ennār** niṇ maṛam kūṟu kuḷāttar<sup>3</sup> (pati.39:2)  
 [**emakku** ‘to us’; **il** ‘to be absent’; **ennār** ‘they will not say’]  
 ‘The group (of warriors) who proclaim your valor, will not say to us  
 “We have nothing for you.”’  
 ‘The group (of warriors) who proclaim your valor, will not say “No”  
 to us.’

uyarnta vēṭṭattu uyarnticiṇōrkku ... toyyā ulakattu nukarcciyum kūṭum  
 toyyā ulakattu **nukarcci il eṇiṇ māri p pirappiṇ iṇmaiyum kūṭum**<sup>4</sup>  
 (pura.214:6, 8-10)  
 [**nukarcci** ‘experience, enjoyment’; **il** ‘to be non-existent’]  
 ‘For noble people with lofty desires, experience of the unaging  
 world (of the gods) is also possible. If there is no experience of  
 that world, cessation of birth will also be possible in their next/different  
 birth.’

<sup>3</sup> Here **il** does not have an overt direct object. The convention in such instances is to assume the object to be “something.” In this context, the combination of the assumed object “something” and the negative verb **il** has provided “nothing.” Note that **emakku il ennār** is here interpreted to mean “They will not say “No” to us” rather than “They will not say that they do not have anything for themselves.” The first person (**yām** ‘we’) in the dative form **emakku** ‘for/to us’ refers to the narrator of the poem, not the warriors mentioned in the poem.

<sup>4</sup> **toyyā ulakam** in the phrase **toyyā ulakattu nukarcci** literally means ‘the world which does not wear out; the world which does not sag.’

ceṛraṇṇu āyiṇuṁ ceyirttaṇṇu āyiṇuṁ urraṇṇu āyiṇuṁ **uyvu inru** mātō  
 pāṭunar pōla k kai toḷutu ētti irantaṇṇākāl vēṇṭuṁ ... vaḷavaṇ  
 koṇṭa kūṛṇē (pura.226:1-4, 6)

[**uyvu** (verbal noun) 'escape, survival'; **inru** 'there is not']

'Had it suppressed/accumulated its anger inside, had it shown the anger outwardly, or had it gotten to him, Death **would** certainly **not** have escaped. It must have begged (for its life) worshipping with its hands and praising him like the singers.'

koṭiyōr **inru** avaṇ kaṭi uṭai viyaṇ pulam (peru:41)  
 [koṭiyōr 'wicked/cruel people'; **inru** 'it does not have']  
 'His wide guarded land **does not** have wicked people.'

icaiyum inṇamum ītalum mūṇṇuṁ acaiyuṭaṇ iruntōrkku arum **puṇarvu inṇm**  
 (narr.214:1-2)

[**puṇarvu** (verbal noun) 'union'; **inṇm** 'there are no \_\_']

'For those who stay (at home) with / because of lethargy, there is **no** rare **union** of the three, (namely) fame, pleasure, and beneficence.'

oru tiṛam **parral iliyarō** (pura.6:9-10)

[**parral** 'holding, grabbing';

**iliyarō** imperative/optative < **il** 'to be non-existent']

'**May you not hold** on to (just) one side (of things).'

'May you not have prejudice.'

vayiṇu mācu **ilīyar** avaṇ īṇṇa tāyē (pati.20:27)

[**mācu** 'flaw, blemish';

**ilīyar** imperative/optative < **il** 'to be non-existent';

**mācu ilīyar** 'may not have any flaws']

'May the mother who gave birth to him **prosper/thrive**.'

## A NOTE ON THE VERB ā

**GENERAL:** The verb ā is intransitive and basically means 'to be X.' It plays an interesting and special role in classical Tamil. It is added as a suffix in its basic form ā to a bare verb stem or a non-past/non-completive stem but follows a nominal or a finite verb in a conjugated form. As a suffix, it always provides an unaccomplished sense in adjectival or adverbial participles but an incomplete sense in an infinitive. Specifically, it provides a negative sense in an adjectival or adverbial participle but a positive one in an infinitive. However, it retains the negative sense of the verb when added to the intrinsically negative verbs **al** 'not to be X' and **il** 'to be non-existent.' When it follows a nominal or a finite verb in a conjugated form, it brings the status of a verb to the nominal and the status of a nominal to the finite verb.

### The ā Used as a Suffix

When ā is suffixed to a verb stem to produce certain participles (adjectival, adverbial, or infinitive), it basically seems to provide an incon-

clusiveness to the action underlying the verb of the participle. That is, if it is the suffix of an adjectival or adverbial participle, it produces an unaccomplished/immaterial sense to the imminent/potential action underlying the verb root from which the participle is derived, so the participle turns out to be negative. If *ā* is the infinitive suffix, on the other hand, it produces a sense of open-endedness or incompleteness/continuity to a live action denoted by the verb root from which the infinitive is derived.

### The *ā* in Adjectival Participles

For example, consider **kalaṅkā-c-ceṅkōl** ‘sceptre which does not swerve’ (*pura.230:4*). Here, **kalaṅkā** is an adjectival participle derived from **kalaṅku** ‘to be agitated, be confused, swerve.’ The *ā* suffixed to **kalaṅku** makes it clear that the imminent/potential action of swerving did not happen to the item referred by the noun (**ceṅkōl** ‘sceptre’) it modifies. This “immaterializing” feature of *ā* must have been very useful to classical Tamil poets when they wanted to distinguish between several items denoted by the same name but with different qualities. Therefore, we find in classical Tamil, expressions in which a negative adjectival participle distinguishes an item from similar items basically for the absence of a known quality: e.g., **pūvā vaṅci** ‘vaṅci that does not bloom’ (*pura.32:2*); **tuṅvā naṟavu** ‘naṟavu which no one drinks’ (*pati.60:12*); **nūlā-k-kaliṅkam** ‘kaliṅkam (garment) that was not spun (from cotton)’ (*pati.12:21*); **vēlā-p-pārppān** ‘the brahmin who does not perform Vedic sacrifices’ (*aka.24:1*). In each of these cases, the item which follows the adjectival participle marked by *ā* is a noun and seems to adhere to the norm/likelihood signified by the verb root underlying the participle. The only way to separate an item, which shares only its name not the norm with others, is to say/imply that the item under consideration does not adhere to the norm/likelihood. Thus, the expression **pūvā vaṅci** ‘vaṅci that does not bloom’ implies that there is a **vaṅci** which follows the norm and does bloom. It may be noted

that the **vañci** which follows the norm is a flowering plant. So **pūvā vañci** refers to the capital city **Vañci** of a Tamil king whereas the other **vañci** refers to a flowering vine.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, while **tuvvā naṛavu** refers to an old town by the name of **Naṛavu**, the other **naṛavu** refers to honey or liquor which is consumed; **nūlā k kaliṅkam** refers to a silk garment which is produced by not spinning cotton. And while **vēḷā-p-pārppān** singles out a **pārppān** 'brahmin' who does not perform Vedic sacrifices, another **pārppān** is referred to as being involved in a Vedic sacrifice: **amarar vēḷvi p pākam uṇṭa ... pārppān** 'he who ate the offering made by the immortal gods at the sacrifice' (*pari.5:26-27*).<sup>2</sup> Thus, as observed in all these cases, the **ā** occurring as the negative adjectival participle suffix implies the unaccomplished/immaterialized nature of an imminent action.<sup>3</sup>

### The ā in Adverbial Participles

Consider **pūvē ... taṇ uṟu viḷumam ariyā meṇ mela t teṟu katir iṇ tuyil pacu vāy tiṛakkum** 'The flowers, **without realizing** the grief they are about to experience, slowly and gently open their fresh mouths in their pleasant sleep in the light of the destructive rays (of the sun)' (*narr.275:2, 4-5*). Here, **ā** is the suffix in the negative adverbial participle **ariyā** derived from **ari** 'to know, realize', and it serves to indicate the unaccomplished aspect of the potential action of knowing denoted by the verb **ari** from which the participle is derived. Note that there are two actions, one

<sup>1</sup> Compare **pūvā vañciyil pūṭṭa vañci** 'Vañci (flowers) which blossomed in (the city of) Vañci which does not bloom' (*cilap.26:50*).

<sup>2</sup> Some other types of **pārppān** are referred to as messengers and those who perform rituals: **tūtu oy pārppān** 'pārppān who goes as a messenger' (*aka.337:7*); **paṭiva-p-pārppān** 'pārppān who observes a penance/ritual' (*mull:37*).

<sup>3</sup> This poetic technique of negation using negative adjectival participles is frequently employed in later Tamil poetry, especially in medieval poetry.

indicated by the participle (**aṛiyā** ‘without realizing/knowing’) and the other by the finite verb following the participle (**tiṛakkum** ‘it opens; they open’). The **ā** is attached to the verb denoting the first action (**aṛi**) which is potential but has not materialized and is followed by a subsequent action (**tiṛa**). Specifically, the **ā** here marks the unaccomplished potential action and serves as a fluid demarcation between that action and a subsequent action. One can say that the first action develops into or materializes as the next.<sup>4</sup>

Now, consider a different type of **ā** used in **inṇicai ōrā iruntaṇam** ‘We were sitting down **listening** to the sweet music’ (*aka.388:9*). Here, **ā** marks the infinitive **ōrā** which is derived from **ōr** ‘to listen.’ There are two actions, one indicated by the infinitive (**ōrā** ‘listening’) and the other by the verb (**iruntaṇam** ‘we were sitting down’) following the infinitive. The action of listening has not come to a conclusion and is accompanied by the action of sitting down. The **ā** is attached to the verb denoting the ongoing action (**ōr** ‘to listen’) while there is another action/state (**iru** ‘to stay, sit down’). Here, **ā** as the infinitive suffix implies a flowing connection between two concurrent or overlapping actions or states of being, namely the action of listening and the state of sitting down.

This type of affirmative **ā** at the end of an infinitive is used to connect more than two concurrent or overlapping actions as witnessed in **pārā k kuṛalā p paṇiyā ... yār ivaṇ niṇṇīr eṇa k kūri** ‘he **looked, blabbered, stooped**, and said, “Who are you standing here?”’ (*kali.65:10-11*). Literally, it translates as ‘**looking, blabbering, stooping**, he said, “Who are you standing here?,” and ... .’ There are three concurrent or overlapping actions (looking, blabbering, and stooping) marked by **ā** (**pārā, kuṛalā, and paṇiyā**) and they are accompanied by the final action (**kūru** ‘state, speak’).

---

<sup>4</sup> Compare **ūr aṛiyal ākā kiṭantaṇa** ‘The towns were lying still **without being known**’ from a later text, *muttolḷāyiram* 116:2, where the **ā** suffixed to **ā(ku)** ‘to be(come)’ also provides a negative sense.

It can be said that ā in such instances marks one or more unfinished actions and serves as a conduit between them and the succeeding/concluding action (**kūru** ‘to state’).

### Traditional Treatment of ā as a Suffix

There is no structural indicator to separate the two kinds of ā occurring in verbal participles—one marking unaccomplished/immaterialized actions (in negative adverbial participles) and the other marking ongoing actions (in the infinitives). Both are followed by another verb. Context determines the meaning in such cases.

Traditional commentators interpret both forms (those denoting unaccomplished/ immaterialized actions and those denoting ongoing actions) as “verbal participles,” but resolve the ambiguity by keeping the ā in certain forms and removing the ā from certain other forms. They keep the ā in their translation of the form indicating an unaccomplished/immaterialized action through a negative adverbial participle to convey the negative sense. They remove the ā from the form denoting an ongoing action and change the infinitive into a positive adverbial participle or an infinitive with a different suffix: cf. Pinnattur Narayanasamy Aiyer’s translation of **aṛiyā** (*naṛṛ.275:4*) as **ārāyāmal** where the original ā is retained in the suffix **āmal**; P.V. Somasundaranar’s translation of **ōrā** (*aka.388:9*) as **uṇarntu** ‘understanding’ which is an affirmative adverbial participle and does not contain the original suffix ā. U.V. Saminathier interprets an infinitive with the suffix ā (**orāa** ‘as ... steps aside’) as an infinitive with the suffix **a: oruva** (*pati.72:9*). Similar translations can be found in the cases of **vāy vāḷā nīṇṛāl** ‘she stood without saying anything’ (*pari.20:46*), **uraiyā** ‘stating; making a statement’ (*aka.5:19*), **nilam kiḷaiyā** ‘scratching the floor’ (*aka.16:15*), etc. Thus, it is clear that in medieval and later traditional commentaries, the classical Tamil negative adverbial participle suffix ā is reformed as **ātu** or **āmal** (e.g., **aṛiyātu** or **aṛiyāinal** ‘without knowing’),



whereas the classical Tamil infinitive suffix *ā* is reformed as an adverbial participle suffix *i*, *u*, or *y* (e.g., *pāṭi* ‘sang and ...’; *unarntu* ‘knowing’; *pōy* ‘having gone; went and ...’) or as an infinitive with the suffix *a* (e.g., *oruva*).

It may be pointed out here that precisely because of the structural ambiguity presented by the *ā* occurring as a verbal participle suffix in classical Tamil, there seem to exist two different interpretations when a verbal participle ending with *ā* is followed by a conjugated form of the verb *nil* ‘to stand, stay.’ Consider *vāy vālā ninrāl* ‘she stood without speaking’ (*pari.20:46*) and *vārā ninranaḷ* ‘she is coming’ (*aink.397:3*), where both examples contain a verbal participle in *ā* followed by a conjugated form of *nil*. Normally, the former (*vālā ninrāl*) is understood as conveying a negative sense and the latter (*vārā ninranaḷ*) as conveying an affirmative sense. There is no reason why both cannot be construed as giving a “negative” sense to denote the unaccomplished/immaterialized aspect of the verb underlying the participles *vālā* and *vārā*: *vāy vālā ninrāl* ‘she stood without speaking’ and *vārā ninranaḷ* ‘she stayed (back) without yet coming.’

The problem in this situation is that these are the only two attestations in classical Tamil with the structure, verbal participle in *ā* + conjugated form of *nil*. To add to the obscurity of the situation, the verb (*\*vāl*) underlying the form *vālā* is not attested in an affirmative form for comparison (e.g., *vāy \*vālīnāl* ‘she was able to speak’). Compare the only other instance where it occurs, again with a negative sense: *vāy vālēn nirpa* ‘as I stood without speaking’ (*kali.65:15*). Therefore, in the tradition, *vālā* has always been understood as a negative form. Contrary to this, the verb (*var* ‘to come’) underlying the form *vārā* is attested also in affirmative forms (e.g., *varum* ‘it will come’ *narr.89:9*). Therefore, *vārā* has been understood as a negative form when occurring as an adjectival participle (e.g., *vārā vankaṇāḷar* ‘heartless person who has not come’ *narr.89:9-10*)

but as a positive form when followed by the verb **nil** (e.g., **vārā ninraṇaḷ** ‘she is coming’ *aink.397:3*).

Actually, a few things seem to be operative here. The fact that affirmative forms of **\*vāḷ** are not attested in classical Tamil has contributed to the constant negative interpretation of **vālā ninrāl**. On the other hand, the context of the poem in which **vārā ninraṇaḷ** (*aink.397:3*) occurs has led to its constant positive understanding. The context of **vārā ninraṇaḷ** is that an eloped heroine sends a message for her kith and kin through some strangers whom she met on the way. The oldest commentary on this poem does not provide a translation of **vārā ninraṇaḷ**, which has nevertheless been understood as a positive form by later scholars.<sup>5</sup>

The semantics of the verb **nil** ‘to stand’, which represents a steady state, seems to have contributed to the understanding of its combination with **ā** (as **ānil**) as marking an ongoing action, consequently making the participle marked by **ā** understood as positive. Therefore, we see medieval grammarians positing **āninru** (**ā** + **nil** + **tu**) as a present tense marker.<sup>6</sup> Traditional commentators on classical Tamil poetry follow this rule — hence, the modern understanding of **vārā ninraṇaḷ** as a positive form.

As pointed out above, both **vālā ninrāl** and **vārā ninraṇaḷ** can be understood as expressing an action that was about to begin (**vāy \*vāḷ** ‘to be able to speak’; **var** ‘to come, arrive’). Once the action underlying the participle is accomplished/materialized, a different marker (e.g., **u**) may be used: cf. **vantu ninraṇan** ‘he has arrived’ (*narr.267:12*).<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, no similar example (**\*vāḷi**) is attested in the case of **\*vāḷ**. In the case of

<sup>5</sup> Naturally, if one were to follow the Tamil tradition, in the context of this poem where the eloped heroine is expected to return home, **vārā ninraṇaḷ** cannot simply be interpreted as conveying a negative sense.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Nanṇūl*, Rule 143.

<sup>7</sup> These are the markers (**i**, **y**, or **u**) that occur as suffixes at the end of full-fledged adverbial participle forms.

negative adverbial participles ending with the suffix **ā**, classical Tamil poems do have alternate forms: e.g., **eyyātu viṭutalō koṭitē** ‘It would be truly cruel, if we let mother **not know** about your lovesickness’ (*aink.242:3*).<sup>8</sup>

### The Verb **ā** Following a Nominal or a Finite Verb

When following a nominal or a finite verb, **ā** implies a past state of being prior to the state of being signified by the nominal or finite verb. It accomplishes/materializes/completes the state of being or the process signified by the nominal or finite verb. Consequently, it paves a way for subsequent states of being or processes. Actually, the finite verb which **ā** follows can be construed as a participial noun type of nominal.

### EXAMPLES

**ā**: as a suffix.

(bare stem + **ā**; adjectival participle)

**kalaṅkā c ceṅkōl**

(*pura.230:4*)

[**kalaṅkā** adjp < **kalaṅku** ‘to be agitated, be confused’ + **ā**;

**ceṅkōl** ‘perfect staff, sceptre’]

‘**perfect staff/sceptre which does not swerve**’

(Note that **ā** here gives a negative sense.)

(bare stem + glide + **ā**; adjectival participle)

**nī vāṭtal īyā vaḷaṇ aru paitiram**

(*pati.19:17-18*)

---

<sup>8</sup> See “Negative Adverbial Participles” for more.

[vā]tal 'living, life'; Īyā adjp < Ī 'to bestow, provide' + glide y + ā  
**paitiram** 'green fields']  
 'unfertile enemy lands for which you do not provide a (good) life'  
 (Note that ā here gives a negative sense.)

(non-past/non-completive stem in k + ā; adjectival participle)

īrkku iṭai pōkā ēr iḷa vaṇa mulai (poru:36)  
 [pōkā < pōk non-past stem of pō 'to go, enter' + ā;  
 īrkku 'straw'; mulai 'breasts']  
 'beautiful young breasts between which (even) a straw cannot go'  
 (Note that ā here gives a negative sense.)

(bare stem + ā; adjectival participle)

naṇ vāy allā vāḷkkai (narr.46:10)  
 [vāy verbal noun < vāy 'to happen, to be true';  
 allā adjp < al 'not to be X' + ā; vāḷkkai 'life, living']  
 'life without good opportunities'  
 'life which is not (an opportunity for) the occurrence of good things'  
 (Note that ā here retains the negative sense of the stem al which is intrinsically negative.)

(bare stem + ā; adjectival participle)

vāy allā veṇmai (kali.88:6)  
 [vāy 'truth, reality'; allā adjp < al 'not to be X' + ā;  
 veṇmai 'whiteness, naivete, honesty']  
 'honesty that is not real'  
 (Note that ā here retains the negative sense of the stem al which is intrinsically negative.)

(bare stem + ā; adjectival participle)

**karavu illā k kavi vaṇ kai** (pura.377:8)

[**karavu** ‘hiding, concealing’;

**illā** adjp < **il** ‘to be non-existent’ + **ā**; **kai** ‘hand’]

‘rich hand which is folded down and which does not have concealing’

‘rich hand which does not know to refuse to give’

(Note that **ā** here retains the negative sense of the stem **il** which is intrinsically negative.)

(bare stem + ā; adjectival participle)

**tam alatu illā nam** nayantu aruḷi innum vārār āyiṇum (narr.189:1-2)

[**tam** oblique of **tām** ‘he’; **alatu** ‘besides, except’;

**illā** adjp < **il** ‘to be non-existent’ + **ā**; **nam** oblique of **nām** ‘we’]

‘although he has not yet come thinking of us who cannot exist without him’

(Note that **tam alatu illā nām** literally means ‘we who do not exist without him.’ Also note that **ā** here retains the negative sense of the stem **il** which is intrinsically negative.)

(bare stem + ā; adverbial participle)

**pākaṇum nīṭittāy enru** kaṭāam kaṭum tiṇ tēr **pūṭṭu viṭāa** niṇuttu

(kali.66:23-25)

[**pūṭṭu** ‘locking, lock’; **viṭāa** advp < **viṭu** ‘to let go, release’ + **ā**]<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Compare **piriyātu irukka** em cuṇṇamōṭu uṭaṇē ‘May we continue to be together with our kin without departing from them’ (pari.18:56), where **piriyātu** demonstrates the fullfledged negative adverbial participle form with the suffix (āt)u.

‘And the chariot driver would rush the strong fast chariot (even) **without releasing** its lock because you were delayed (here).’

(Note that ā here gives a negative sense.)

(bare stem + glide + ā; adverbial participle)

pūvē ... taṇ uṇṇ viḷumam aṛiyā meṇ mela t teṇ katir iṇ tuyil pacu  
vāy tiṛakkum (narr.275:2, 4-5)

[viḷumam ‘grief’; aṛiyā advp < aṛi ‘to know, realize’ + glide y + ā]

‘The flowers, **without realizing** the grief that they are about to experience, slowly and gently open their fresh mouths during their pleasant sleep in the light of the destructive rays (of the sun)’

(Note that ā here gives a negative sense.)

(bare stem + ā; adverbial participle)

ceṇṇī nī cellā viṭuvāyēl ... muṭṭuppāṭu ākalum uṇṇu (kali.93:33, 36)

[cel ‘to go’; cellā advp < cel; viṭu ‘to let go, allow, give up’]

‘Go. If you **give up going** (to your other women), there will even be an obstacle.’

‘Go. If you don’t go (to your other women), it will be difficult to join them later.’

(Note that ā here gives a negative sense.)

(bare stem + ā; infinitive)

innicai ōrā iruntaṇam (aka.388:9)

[innicai ‘sweet music’; ōrā advp < ōr ‘to listen’ + ā;

iru ‘to be, stay, sit’]

‘We were **sitting down listening** to the sweet music.’

(Note that ā here gives a positive sense.)

(bare stem + ā; infinitive)

mukam iraiñci nilam **kiḷaiyā** ... tiruntuka mātō num celavu eṇa  
**veytuyirā** ... evvamoṭu aḷinta peru vituppu uruvi

(aka.299:13, 18-21)

[nilam **kiḷai** 'to scratch the ground'; **veytuyir** 'to sigh']

'the distressed woman, who pined with grief **while** stooping her head and **scratching the ground, sighed and** said (to me), "May your task be perfect!." '

**ā**: following a nominal or a finite verb.

(adjectival noun + adjectival participle of ā)

kāṇal am perunturai c cil **cevittu ākiya puṇarcci** alar eḷa (aka.90:3-4)  
[**cevittu** 'that which is in the ear'; **ākiya** (adjp) 'that which is';  
**puṇarcci** 'union']

'as our **union which was** (only) in a few ears emerged as a gossip ...'

'Only a few people first heard about the union between me and my lover. Later it became the gossip of the town.'

(verbal noun + adjectival participle of ā)

yāvarum **kāṇal ākā māṇ eḷil ākam** (aka.220:8-9)

[**kāṇal** (verbal noun) 'seeing';

**ākā** (adjp) 'that which does not become'; **ākam** 'chest']

'the beautiful elegant **chest** (of the woman you love) **which cannot be seen** by everyone'

(adjectival noun + adverbial participle of ā)

arum poruḷ **vēṭkaiyam āki** niṇ tuṟantu peruṇ kal atar iṭai p pirinta  
kālai (aiṅk.359:1-2)

[**vēṭkaiyam** ‘we (hon.), with a desire’; **āki** ‘having become \_\_ ’]  
‘**having become a person with desire** for precious wealth, when I  
renounced you and departed / went through the big stony path’

putalvan iṇṇeṇa p peyar peyarttu ... **mutu peṇṭu āki** t tuṇcutiyō<sup>10</sup>  
(narr.370:5-7)

[**mutu peṇṭu** ‘experienced/old woman’; **āki** ‘having become \_\_ ’]  
‘**Having given birth to a son and received a different name**, are you  
resting **because you have become an experienced/old woman?**’

eṇṇāl tiṅkaḷ **vaṭivirru āki** aṇṇā illā ... vaṟu vāy (poru.11-12)  
[**vaṭivirru** ‘with a shape’; **āki** ‘having become \_\_ ’]

‘**hollow mouth without the uvula, which has come to have the  
shape of an eighth day moon**’

‘**hollow mouth without the uvula, which has the shape of an eighth  
day moon**’

(The reference is to the face / top section of the base of a harp.)

<sup>10</sup> The phrase **peyar peyarttu** is interpreted as ‘receiving a different name.’ According to a traditional commentary, **peyar** ‘name’ here refers to the name of the phase of life that a woman is in. After childbirth, a woman enters a new phase in her life, hence the remark “receiving a different name” (cf. Pinnattur Narayanasamy Aiyar’s commentary on *narrinai*:370).



(adjectival noun + causal form of ā)

naṭpiṛku ollātu oruṅku varal viṭāatu oḷika eṇa k kūṛi inaiyai ātalin  
 niṇakku ... yāṇ mēyiṇēṇ aṇmaiyāṇē āyiṇum immai pōla k kāṭṭi  
 ummai ... niṇṇōṭu uṭaṇ uṛaivu ākkuka uyarnta pālē (*pura.236:6-12*)  
 [inaiyai ‘you, of this nature’; ātalin ‘since it is the situation;  
 since it is so; therefore’]

‘Without conforming to / agreeing with (our) friendship, you did not let me go with you (when you died). You said, “Stay behind.” **Since you have become** (different) **like this**, may the noble Destiny make me stay together with you in the other world as in this world, though I am not suitable for you.’

(adjectival noun + concessive of fact of ā)

naṭpiṛku ollātu oruṅku varal viṭāatu oḷika eṇa k kūṛi inaiyai ātalin  
 niṇakku ... yāṇ mēyiṇēṇ aṇmaiyāṇē āyiṇum immai pōla k kāṭṭi  
 ummai ... niṇṇōṭu uṭaṇ uṛaivu ākkuka uyarnta pālē  
 (*pura.236:6-12*)

[mēyiṇēṇ ‘I was agreeable’; aṇmaiyāṇē ‘one who is not’;  
āyiṇum ‘although, though’]

‘Without conforming to / agreeing with (our) friendship, you did not let me go with you (when you died). You said, “Stay behind.” Since you have become (different) like this, may the noble Destiny make me stay together with you in the other world as in this world, **though I am not suitable for you / agreeable to you.**’

cēralātaṇ ... nitiyattu aṇṇa oru nāl oru pakal peṇiṇum vaḷināl taṅkalar  
 vāḷi tōḷi ... moḷi peyar tēttar āyiṇum ... kātalar ceṇṇa nāṭṭē  
 (*aka.127:3, 10, 11-12, 17-18*)

[tēttar ‘one who is in the country’; āyiṇum ‘although’]

‘**Although he is in a country** with a different language, your lover will not stay for another day in that country he is gone to even if he gets one day the wealth like that of Cēralātaṇ’s.’

**innam ākavum** inku nattuṟantōr (aka. 85:3)

[**innam** 'we, of this nature'; **ākavum** 'although it has become']

'he who renounced/left us here **although we have become** like this (because of lovesickness)'

onṇār ār eyil avar kaṭṭu ākavum numatu eṇa p pāṇ kaṭaṇ iṟukkum  
vaḷḷiyōy (pura.203:9-11)

[**avar kaṭṭu** 'that which is theirs'; **ākavum** 'although it has become']

'O generous one, who fulfills (your) duty to the bards by giving away the precious moats of your enemies, thinking that they belong to you, **although they are in their/enemies' place.**'

(adjectival noun + concessive of supposition of ā)

perum celvar āyiṇum ... makkaḷai illōrkku p payakkurāi illai t tām  
vāḷum nālē (pura.188:2, 6-7)

[**celvar** 'rich people'; **āyiṇum** 'even if']

'**Even if they are very rich**, for those who do not have children, there is no fruit/result fulfilling what they lack in their living days.'

aḷuṅkal mūtūr viḷavu inru āyiṇum tuṇcātu ākum (aka.122:1-2)

[**viḷavu inru** 'it is without festival'; **āyiṇum** 'even if']

'This noisy town does not rest **even if there is no festival.**'

(verbal noun + concessive of supposition of ā)

yākkai in-uyir kaḷivatu āyiṇum niṇ makaḷ āy malar uṇkaṇ pacalai  
kāma nōy eṇa c ceppāṭimē (aka.52:12-15)

[**kaḷivatu** 'passing, passage'; **āyiṇum** 'even if']

**‘Even if life(-breath) passes out of my body, please do not tell (my mother) “The paleness in your daughter’s attractive eyes, which are like fine flowers, is (nothing but) sickness of passion.” ’**

nilam puṭai **peyarvatu āyinum** oruvaṇ ceyti koṇṇōrkku uyti il  
(*puṛa.34:5-6*)

[**peyarvatu** ‘moving, movement’; **āyinum** ‘even if’]

**‘Even if the earth were to move to one side / slant, there is no escape for those who destroy someone’s (good) deed.’**

**‘It is unlikely that the earth would slant. But it is certain that there is no escape for ungrateful people who destroy someone’s good actions.’**

(adjectival noun + conditional of ā)

kātali **uyir** ciṛitu **uṭaiyaḷ āyiṇ** em vayiṇ uḷḷātu iruttalō aritē  
(*puṛa.210:5-7*)

[**uyir** ‘life’; **uṭaiyaḷ** ‘she who has’; **āyiṇ** ‘if’]

**‘If my lady-love has a little life (left), it would be difficult (for her) to stay without thinking about me.’**

naṇṇāṭṭu p porunaṇ **nōy ilan āyiṇ** naṇṇu  
(*puṛa.229:14-15*)

[**nōy** ‘sickness’; **ilan** ‘he who is without ... ;

he who does not have’; **āyiṇ** ‘if’]

**‘It would be good if the Porunaṇ (king) of the good country is without sickness.’**

**‘It would be good if the king is not sick.’**

nī uṇṇuṇ poy c cūḷ **aṇaṇku ākiṇ** maṇṇu iṇi yār mēl viḷiyumō kūṇu  
(*kali.88:20-21*)

[**aṇaṇku** ‘affliction, source of distress’; **ākiṇ** ‘if’]

‘Tell me, if the false oath you are taking **becomes an affliction**, then on whom will it show/end?’

(adjectival noun + imperative/optative of ā)

**nōy inru āka** ceyporu! (aka.13:15)

[**nōy** ‘flaw’; **inru** ‘that which does not exist’; **āka** ‘may it be’]

‘May the wealth (you are seeking) **be** without flaws.’

cemmal mūtūr aṛinta **mākkaṭṭu ākuka** tilla ... aṇṇai cenra ārē

(aka.15:7, 8, 19)

[**mākkaṭṭu** ‘that which has people’; **ākuka** ‘may it become’]

‘May the path through which my little lady went become one **which** has noble towns and **familiar people**.’

**nōy ilai ākumati** peruma

(pura.209:14)

[**nōy** ‘sickness’; **ilai** ‘you who do not have’;

**ākumati** ‘may you become’]

‘Lord, **may you be** without sickness.’

‘Lord, may you live without sickness.’

**ūraṇ māṛpu paḷaṇam ākaṛka**

(aiṅk.4:5-6)

[**paḷaṇam** ‘field’; **ākaṛka** ‘may it not become’]

‘May the Ūraṇ’s chest **not become a field** (for his concubines).’

(adjectival noun + infinitive of ā)

**yāmē emiyam āka** nīyē oḷiya c cūlntaṇai āyiṇ ... val eyirṛōḷ vayiṇ

piriyāy āyiṇ naṇṇu

(aka.33:12-13, 16-17)

[**yām** ‘we’; **emiyam** ‘by ourselves’; **āka** ‘to become’]

‘In case you plan to leave, **so/as we become alone**, it would be good if you do not go away from the woman who has white teeth.’

**aravaiyum maravaiyum allai āka ... nīl matil oru cīrai oṭuṅkutaḷ**  
**naṇuttakavu uṭaittu** (pura.44:13, 15-16)

[**aravai** ‘you who are righteous’; **maravai** ‘you who are valorous’;  
**allai** ‘you who are not’; **āka** ‘to become’]

‘It is shameful that you are withdrawn on one side of the long fortress wall **as someone without righteousness and valor.**’

**am cilai iṭavatu āka ... varutaḷ vāyvatu ... verpaṇ** (aka.38:3, 5)

[**cilai** ‘bow’; **iṭavatu** ‘that which is on the left’; **āka** ‘to become’]

‘The arrival of the **Verpaṇ** with a beautiful **bow on his left** is certain’

(participial noun + infinitive of ā)

**ceṇmō peruma em viḷavu uṭai nāṭṭu eṇa yam taṇ ariyunam āka**

(pura.381:5-6)

[**ariyunam** ‘we who know’; **āka** ‘to become’]

‘as we (became the people who) **informed** him “Lord, we will go to our festive country” ’

**kiṇaimakaṇ ceṇru ... taṇ nilai ariyunaṇ āka an nilai iṭukkaṇ iriyal**  
**pōka uṭaiya koṭuttōṇ entai** (pura.388:3, 5-7)

[**ariyunaṇ** ‘he who knows’; **āka** ‘to become; turn into’]

‘As the **kiṇai-drummer** went to his (i.e., **Paṇṇaṇ**’s) place and **turned into** one who understood his state/situation, my father (-like **Paṇṇaṇ**) gave right away what he had, so his (i.e., **drummer**’s) sorrow would go away.’

(nominal + personal verb form of ā)

celu nakar c celīya elu enin avalum ollāl yāmum oli ena allam  
āyinam (narr.159:7-9)

[oli ‘stay back’; ena ‘to say’; allam ‘we are not’;

āyinam ‘we became’]

‘If I tell her “Get up, so we could go to (my) bounteous house” she would not agree. We/I too became those/one who could not tell her “Stay back.” ’

cinam māriya anni minili pōla ... ānā uvakaiyēm āyinem ... am  
tīnkilavi vanta mārē (aka.262:11-12, 13, 18)

[ānā ‘endless’; uvakaiyēm ‘we with joy; we who are delighted’;

āyinem ‘we became’]

‘In response to the good message that arrived, we were endlessly delighted like Anni Miñili whose anger changed/disappeared.’

anṇal kānā ūnkē ninṇinum pulliyēm manṇē iniyē innēm āyinēm  
manṇē (pura.141:7-9)

[innēm ‘we are like this’; āyinēm ‘we became’]

‘Before we met the Noble One, we were lowlier than you (in our situation). Now, we have become (wealthy) like this.’

ciru cem kuvalai ī ena irappavum ollāl nī emakku yāraiyo ena p  
peyarvōl kaiyatai ... atu nī pāl vallāy āyinai

(pati.52:22-24, 25-26)

[vallāy ‘you who are capable’; āyinai ‘you became;  
you have become’]

‘Although you beg for it, the little red water-lily is in her (your queen’s) hand, who without agreeing (to give it to you) moves away saying “Who are you to me?.” **You have become unable to share (that flower).**’

**naṭukal āyiṇaṇ** puravalaṇ (*pura.221:13*)  
 [naṭukal ‘hero stone’; āyiṇaṇ ‘he became’]  
 ‘The protector (of the suppliants) **has become a hero-stone.**’

malar ār malir niṟai vantaṇa p puṇal āṭu puṇar tuṇai āyiṇaḷ emakkē  
(*aink.72:4-5*)

[tuṇai ‘companion’; āyiṇaḷ ‘she became’]  
 ‘Since the flood arrived filled with flowers, **she (my lover) became a companion** uniting with me bathing in the water.’

āy anṭiraṇ ... mēlōr ulakam eytiṇaṇ eṇāa ... puravalar k kāṇātu ...  
 pulavar ... piṟar nāṭu paṭu celaviṇar āyiṇar iniyē  
(*pura.240:3, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14*)

[celaviṇar ‘those who are on a journey’; āyiṇar ‘they became’]  
 ‘Since Āy Anṭiraṇ reached the world of the Nobles / great people, now the poets have become those **who undertake a journey** to the countries of others without being able to find protectors (here).’

perum kuḷam āyiṟru eṇ itai mulai niṟaintē (*kurū.325:6*)  
 [kuḷam ‘pond’; āyiṟru ‘it became’]  
 ‘The middle of my breasts was filled (with my tears) and a big **pond emerged.**’

anṇaiyum aṟintaṇaḷ alarum āyinru (*aink.236:1*)  
 [alar ‘gossip’; āyinru ‘it became; it came to be’]

**‘Mother has come to know (about her love). Gossip also came into being.’**

perum kal atar iṭai p pirinta kālai t tava naṇi neṭiya āyina iniyē  
 aṇiyilāi ulli yām varutaliṇ naṇiya āyina curattiṭai āṛē  
 (aink.359:2-5)

[neṭiya ‘those which are long’; naṇiya ‘those which are close’;  
 āyina ‘they became’]

‘(With a desire for wealth) when I departed/left through the small path (full) of big stones, the paths/ways through the forest were very much longer. Now, since I am coming (back), thinking about the (woman with) beautiful ornaments, they have become closer.’

yāṇum niṇ cēriyēṇē ayalilāṭṭiyēṇ nuṅkai ākuven niṇakku  
 (aka.386:10-12)

[nuṅkai ‘your younger sister’; ākuven ‘I am’]

‘I too belong to your neighborhood. I live next door. I am a younger sister to you.’

vayalaiyum ... nocciyum ... taṇṭalaiyum teṇuvara nōy ākinrēm ...  
 niṇ tōli ... viṭalaiyai ... malai āṛ iṭai naliyum kol eṇavē  
 (narr.305:1, 2, 4-5, 9, 10)

[nōy ‘sickness, ailment’; ākinrēm ‘we are becoming ...’]

‘While the vayalai creeper and the nocci tree (which our daughter played with), and the grove (where she met her lover alone) are tormenting (us), we are falling sick worrying whether (she) your friend makes the Viṭalai (her lover) sad (as they go) through the difficult mountainous path.’

uḷ ilōrkku vali ākuvan kēḷ ilōrkku k kēḷ ākuvan (pura.396:10-11)  
 [vali ‘strength’; kēḷ ‘kin’; ākuvan ‘he will be; he will become’]



**‘He will become strength** to those who do not have the inside/en-  
thusiasm. **He will become a kin** for those who do not have kin.’

**kauvai ākinratu** aiya niṇ arulē (narr.227:9)

[**kauvai** ‘gossip’; **ākinratu** ‘it is becoming ...’]

‘Lord, your compassion **is becoming** a (matter of) **gossip**.’

ēṇal kāvaliṇ iṭai urru oruvaṇ ... taṇ eṇa c ciṟu puram kavaiyiṇaṇ āka  
ataṟkoṇṭu aḥtē niṇainta neṇcamoṭu **iḥtu ākinru** yāṇ urra nōyē

(narr.128:7, 8-11)

[**iḥtu** ‘this one’; **ākinru** ‘it is becoming ...’]

‘When we were watching the millet field, one person interfered and  
pleasantly/gently hugged my small back. Since then, with a heart  
thinking only about it, the (love)sickness I got **has turned into this**.’

**micai p peyta nīr kaṭal parantu muttu ākuntu** (pura.380:6)

[**muttu** ‘pearl’; **ākuntu** ‘it is becoming ...’]

‘The (rain) water which poured from above spreads on the sea and  
**turns into pearls**.’

**yāṇ ākuval** niṇ nalam taruvēṇē (aka.392:28)

[**yāṇ** ‘I’; **ākuval** ‘I am, I will be’]

‘**I will be the one** who brings (back) your loveliness.’

**peṭai puṇar aṇṇil iyaṅku kural aḷaii k kaṅkulum kaiyaṟavu tantanru**

**yāṅku ākuven** kol aḷiyen yāṇē (narr.152:7-9)

[**yāṅku** ‘how’; **ākuven** ‘I will be’]

‘Mixing with the noise made by the movement of the aṇṇil bird  
uniting with its female, the night also has brought cessation of action  
(upon me). **How/What will I be?** I am to be pitied.’

(Note that **kaiyaṟavu** is translated as ‘cessation of action.’)

mālaiyum uḷḷār āyiṇ kālai yāṅku ākuvam kol pāṇa (aka.14:12-13)

[yāṅku 'how'; ākuvam 'we will be']

'Bard, if he would not think of us even in the evening, **how/what will we be in the morning?**'

celvai āyiṇ celvai ākuvai (pura.70:16)

[celvai 'wealthy one (2nd person)'; ākuvai 'you will become']

'If you go (to him) **you will become a wealthy person.**'

(Note the pun on celvai.)

pati vayiṇ tīrnta num pulampu cēṇ akala p putuvir ākuvir

(malai.411-412)

[putuvir 'new persons (2nd person)'; ākuvir 'you will become']

'As the loneliness of having left your hometown leaves you, **you will become new persons.**'

ceviyiṇ kēṭpiṇum col irantu vekuḷvōḷ kaṇṇiṇ kāṇiṇ eṇ ākuvaḷ kol ...

palar paṭintu uṇṇum niṇ parattai mārpē (aiṅk.84:1-2, 5)

[eṇ 'what?'; ākuvaḷ 'she will become']

'She would be furious beyond words if she even heard (about it). **What will she become** if she looks with her own eyes at your prostituting chest which is enjoyed by many (women).

eṇṇum cāṇrōr cāṇrōr pālar āpa cālār cālār pālar ākupavē

(pura.218:5-8)

[cāṇrōr 'noble people'; pālar 'those who belong';

āpa 'they are, they will become'; cālār 'those who are not noble'; ākupa 'they will become']

'Those who are noble **will always belong among the nobles.** Those who are not noble **will belong among those who are not noble.**'

puḷ inam anaiyar ... iravalar avarai p puravu etirkoḷḷum peruñ cey  
 āṭavar uṭaimai ākum avar uṭaimai avar inmai ākum avar  
 inmaiye (pura.199:3-4, 5-7)

[āṭavar 'men'; uṭaimai 'possession, property';

ākum 'it is, it will be'; avar 'they'; here, it means 'their';

inmai 'non-possession, poverty']

'Poets are like birds. **The property of men who face the responsibility of protecting them and do great things is their possession. Their poverty is their (i.e., the poets') poverty.**'

muḷi ciṇai piḷakkum munpu inmaiye yānai kai maṭittu uyavum  
 kāṇamum iniya ām nummoṭu variṇē (kuru.388:5-7)

[inīya 'pleasant (neuter plural)'; ām 'it will be, it will become']

'If I come along with you, even the forests, where the elephants suffer folding their trunks because of not having the strength even to break dry tree branches, **will be pleasant.**'

tāṅkal ākā āṅku niṇ kaḷirē (pati.53:21)

[tāṅkal 'control'; ākā 'they will not be']

'Your elephants **will not be in control** there.'

(verbal noun + verbal noun of ā)

kāṭalar varuvar eṇpatu vāyvatu ākal ... kāṇiya vammō  
(aka.323:2-3, 7)

[vāyvatu 'happening, reality'; ākal 'coming into being']

'Come to see **the realization** of our belief **that** (your) lover **will come.**'

im maṛai **alar ākāmai**yō aritē (aka.98:24-25)  
 [alar ‘rumour, gossip’; ākāmai ‘not coming into being’]  
 ‘It is unlikely that this secret (love) will **not become a** (matter of) gossip.’

(personal verb + causal of ā)

ceypa ellām **ceytanān ākalin** iṭuka onrō cuṭuka onrō  
 (pura.239:19-20)  
 [ceytanān ‘he did’; ākalin ‘since, therefore’]  
 ‘Since he did all that was/had to be done, bury him or cremate him.’

neṭumāvaḷavaṇ tēvar ulakam **eytinān ātalīn** annōṇ kavikkum kaṇ  
 akaṇ tāḷi vaṇaital vēṭṭanai āyiṇ eṇaiyatūum iru nilam tikiriyā p  
 peru malai maṇṇā vaṇaital ollumō niṇakkē (pura.228:10-15)  
 [eytinān ‘he reached’; ākalīn ‘since, therefore’]  
 ‘Neṭumāvaḷavaṇ reached the world of the gods. Therefore, if you want to make a pot for burying him with a wide orifice, would it be possible somehow to make it with the vast earth as the wheel and the large mountain as the clay?’

(personal verb + concessive of fact of ā)

ūraṇ peṇṭu taṇ koḷunaṇai nammoṭu pulakkum eṇpa nām atu **ceyyām**  
 āyiṇum uyyāmaiṇ ... ciṛitu avaṇ ulamantu varukam ceṇmō tōḷi  
 (aka.106:5-7, 8-9)  
 [ceyyām ‘we do not do, we did not do’; āyiṇum ‘although’]

‘They say that the Ūraṇ’s woman is sulking, associating me with her husband. **Although we did not do** (anything to confirm) that, let us walk around there (in their neighborhood) a little and come back since there is no escape (from her accusation).’

arum curam tuṇintu **piraḷ āyiṇaḷ āyiṇum** ... taṇ māṛpu tuṇai āka t  
tuyiṛruka (aka.35:10-11, 12-13)

[**piraḷ** ‘different woman, another woman’; **āyiṇaḷ** ‘she became’;  
**āyiṇum** ‘although’]

‘**Although she** (my daughter) **has become a stranger** (by eloping with her lover), may he (the lover) make her sleep with his chest as support.’

(personal verb + concessive of supposition of ā)

īyāy āyiṇum iraṅkuvēṇ allēṇ (pura.209:13)

[īyāy ‘you will not give’; āyiṇum ‘even if’]

‘**Even if you do not give** (me anything) I will not feel sorry (for asking you).’

tuṛaivaṇ **kuṛiyāṇ āyiṇum kuṛippinūm** piṛitu oṇṛu aṛiyārkkku uraiṇpalō  
yāṇē (kuru.318:3-5)

[**kuṛiyāṇ** ‘he will not intend’; **āyiṇum** ‘even if’; **kuṛippinūm** ‘even if he intends’]

‘**Whether he does not intend or intends** (to marry me) should I tell/suggest it to the Tuṛaivaṇ who does not (seem to) know anything else?’

(Note that **kuṛiyāṇ āyiṇum kuṛippinūm** is a “whether ... or not ...” type of construction.)

(personal verb + conditional of ā)

cellātīm eṇa c **collinam āyin** celvar kollō (*kuṛu.350:2-3*)

[**collinam** 'we told'; **āyin** 'if']

'Will he go **if we tell** him "Please do not go"?'

tumpi ... aṇṇal neṭu varai c **cēri āyin** ... tiṇai ... kaḷaiṇar taṅkai  
tamarin tīrāl eṇmō (*kuṛu.392:1, 3, 4, 5-6*)

[**cēri** 'you will reach'; **āyin** 'if']

'O honeybee, **if you reach** the tall elevated mountain (of his country), please tell (him) that the younger sister of the people who remove the weeds in the millet field will not vanish / go away from her kin.'

mun niṇru **kaṇṭanir āyin** kaḷaralir ... mataiyya nōkkē (*aka.130:1-2, 14*)

[**kaṇṭanir** 'you saw, you have seen'; **āyin** 'if']

'Friend, you would not chide me **if you had** stood in front (of her) and **seen** her lascivious glances.'

keṭutiyum **viṭṭir āyin** emmoṭu collalum paḷiyō mel iyalir (*kuṛi.144-145*)

[**viṭṭir** 'you will not let go'; **āyin** 'if']

'O women with gentle qualities, **while you do not let** my lost animals go, is it disgraceful even to speak with me?'

**kapilan** iṇru **uḷan āyin** naṇru (*pura.53:12-13*)

[**kapilan** personal name; **uḷan** 'he is, he exists'; **āyin** 'if']

'If (the poet) **Kapilan** was alive today, it would be good.'

inru avar vārār āyinō nanrē (narr.154:9-10)  
 [vārār 'he will not come'; āyin 'if']  
 'It would be good if he does/would not come today.'

iv ulakattu c cānrōr ceyta nanru unṭu āyin imayattu iṇṭi ... mā  
 maḷai poḷinta nuṇ pal tuḷiyiṇum vāliya palavē (pura.34:19-23)  
 [nanru 'good action/deed'; unṭu 'there is'; āyin 'if']  
 'If there is any good deed done by noble people in this world, may  
 you live (as a result of it ) for many years, more than the drops (of  
 rain) poured by the dark clouds gathered on the Himalayas.'

(personal verb + imperative/optative of ā)

īyāy āyiṇum iraṅkuvēṇ allēṇ nōy ilai ākumati peruma nammul kuṛu  
 naṇi kāṅkuvatu āka niṇ maḱil irukkaiyē (pura.209:13-15, 19)  
 [kuṛu naṇi 'much closeness'; kāṅkuvatu 'it will see';  
 āka 'may it be']

'Even if you do not give me (anything) I will not feel sorry (for  
 asking). Lord, may you be without sickness. May your joyful royal  
 court witness the closeness between us.'

ayirai neṭu varai pōla t tolaiyātu āka nī vāḷum nālē (pati.70:26-27)  
 [tolaiyātu 'it will not disappear, it will not perish'; āka 'may it be';  
 nī vāḷum nāl 'the days you live']  
 'Like the tall Ayirai hill, may the days you live not disappear.'

il ākiyarō kālai mālai al ākiyar yāṇ vāḷu nālē (pura.232:1-2)  
 [il 'to be absent'; ākiyarō 'may it be'; kālai 'morning, day';

**mālai** ‘evening, night’]<sup>11</sup>

‘**May the days and nights cease to be.** May the days I live turn/become dark.’

(personal verb + infinitive of ā)

**taṇ pukaḷ ēttinen āka** (pura.383:5)

[**ēttinen** ‘I praised’; **āka** ‘as it is the case’]

‘**I praised his fame and ...**’

**viṭuttal toṭaṅkiṇē āka** (pura.150:17)

[**toṭaṅkiṇē** ‘I started’; **āka** ‘as it comes to be’]

‘**As I started to take leave, ...**’

**ārri iruntaṇem āka** (pura.381:4)

[**iruntaṇem** ‘we were, we were staying, we were sitting down’;

**āka** ‘as it comes to be’]

‘**As we were sitting down / stayed around, having rested ...**’

(personal verb + personal verb of ā)

**yām em kātalar k kāṇēm āyiṇ ... peru nīr k kal poru ciṟu nurai pōla**

**mella mella illākutumē** (kuru.290:3, 4-6)

[**il** ‘to be non-existent’; **ākutum** ‘we become’]

<sup>11</sup> Note that the interpretation given here for **al ākiyar yān vālu nāl** ‘May the days I live turn/become dark’ is different from the traditional interpretation ‘May the days I live not be, since they are not useful.’ See U.V. Saminathier’s commentary on this poem (1963:404). If there is no morning or evening, there will be just darkness — hence the interpretation given in this study. Also the meaning of **al** ‘darkness’ is taken into consideration.



‘If we do not see our lover, **we become nothing** very slowly, like a small dashing foam against a stone in big waters.’

pāri ... kalanta kēṇmaikku ovvāy nī eṇ **pulantānai ākuvai**

(*puṛa.236:3-5*)

[**pulantānai** ‘you sulked, you disliked’;

**ākuvai** ‘you have become, you will become’]

‘O Pāri, **you have come to dislike** me without agreeing to our united friendship.’

**kēḷār ākuvar tōḷi**

(*kuṛu.253:1*)

[**kēḷār** ‘he will not listen’; **ākuvar** ‘he is, he will be’]

‘**He does not hear** (about your grief), my friend.’

perum kaṭaḷ **uṇṇār ākupa nīr vēṭṭōrē**

(*puṛa.204:5-6*)

[**uṇṇār** ‘they will not eat/drink’; **ākupa** ‘they are, they will be’]

‘**Those** who wished for water **will not drink** the big ocean.’

iv aḷuṅkal mūtūr viḷavu iṇṇu āyiṇum **tuñcātu ākum**

(*aka.122:1-2*)

[**tuñcātu** ‘it will not sleep’; **ākum** ‘it is, it will be’]

‘This noisy ancient town **will/does not rest** even if there is no festival.’

puli pārttu orṛiya kaḷiṛṛu irai pīlaippin eli pārttu **orrātu ākum**

(*puṛa.237:16-17*)

[**orrātu** ‘it will not attack’; **ākum** ‘it is, it will be’]

‘If/Because the tiger misses its prey of a male elephant which it viewed/considered (carefully) and attacked, **it will not** look for a mouse and **attack**.’

**inroṭu cinnāl varinūm ... paṭāa ākum em kaṇṇē** (*aka.391:9-10*)  
 [paṭāa ‘they will not rest’; ākum ‘they are, they will be’]  
 ‘Even if he comes (for a rendezvous) for a few days including today, our (hon.) eyes will not rest/sleep.’

(personal verb + verbal noun of ā)

**yān atu paṭuttanen ākutaḷ nāṇi** (*aka.66:18-19*)  
 [paṭuttanen ‘I made it happen’; ākutaḷ ‘being, becoming’]  
 ‘feeling embarrassed about my making it happen’

**avar kāṇ nām ilam ākutaḷ aṇitum** (*narr.299:5-6*)  
 [nām ‘we’; ilam ‘we are not, we do not exist’;  
 ākutaḷ ‘being, becoming’]  
 ‘We understand that we, whom he might (come to) see, are becoming non-entities.’

**aruḷāy ākalō koṭitē** (*narr.195:1*)  
 [aruḷāy ‘you will not show compassion’; ākal ‘becoming’]  
 ‘It is cruel that you are not being compassionate.’

**veṇi eṇa uṇamta vēlan nōy maruntu aṇiyān ākutaḷ aṇṇai kāṇiya** (*kuru.360:1-2*)  
 [aṇiyān ‘he will not know’; ākutaḷ ‘being, becoming’]  
 ‘May mother see that the Vēlan (priest of the deity Murukan) who considered the frenzy (dance as a cure for my lovesickness) does not know the (real) cure for (my love)sickness.’

## A NOTE ON THE VERB ān

**GENERAL:** The verb ān basically means 'to be content.' It is used in classical Tamil like any other verb, but bears a closer similarity to the verb ā 'to be' than to any other verb. Furthermore, classical Tamil negative forms of ān such as ānān 'he will not be content with doing \_\_\_ ; he will not stop doing \_\_\_ ' ; ānāl 'she will not be content with doing \_\_\_ ; she will not stop doing \_\_\_ ', etc. are identical in form with some affirmative personal verb forms of ā in modern Tamil (cf. ānān 'he became \_\_\_ ; he started to \_\_\_ ', ānāl 'she became \_\_\_ ; he started to \_\_\_ ', etc.) . Derivationally, however, the forms of ān and the forms of ā are different and do not bear any semantic connection. Therefore, a note on ān is necessary in this study.

**FORMATION:** In classical Tamil, the verb ān is attested in its past/completive forms or negative forms. In a past/completive form, which always expresses a positive sense, the past/completive marker t is suffixed to ān and other suffixes follow. In a negative adjectival participle form, ā is suffixed to ān to produce ānā which can be understood as 'unending, relentless, discontented' as the opposite of the positive form ānru 'being

fulfilled, contented, contained; having reached a stage of calmness.' In all other attested negative forms of **āṇ**, a PNG suffix beginning with a long vowel is added directly to **āṇ**.

### EXAMPLES

A) The following are the classical Tamil forms of **āṇ** which are not confused with any forms of **ā**. For each derived form of **āṇ**, the corresponding classical form derived from **ā** is also provided:

#### *Forms of āṇ 'to be content'*

**āṇru** advp.

'being fulfilled/contented/calm'  
(*puṛa.191:6*)

**āṇra** adjp.

'fulfilled/contented; calm'  
(*puṛa.26:12*)

**āṇral** verbal noun

'fulfillment, contentment'  
(*aka.168:3*)

#### *Forms of ā 'to be, to become'*

**āki**

'having become ...'  
(*aiṅk.359:1*)

**āyina**

'that which became ...'  
(*pati.19:18*)

**ākiya**

'... who became ...'  
(*kuṛu.252:2*)

**ākal**

'coming into being' (*aka.323:3*)

**ākutal** 'being, becoming'

(*aka.66:19*)

**ātal** 'being; thriving'

(*puṛa.91:10*)

**ānranru** 3rd person personal verb  
 'it is contented/calm' (*aka.350:5*)

**ānatu** 'it became ...'  
 (*kali.147:3*)

**āyinru** 'it became ...'  
 (*aink.236:1*)

**āyirru** 'it became ...'  
 (*kuru.325:6*)

**ākinru** 'it is becoming ...'  
 (*narr.25:12*)

**ākinratu** 'it is becoming ...'  
 (*aka.96:18*)

**ānranai** 2nd person sing. personal verb;  
 participial noun  
 'you are contented; be calm'  
 (*aka.325:14*)

**āyinaī**  
 'you have become ...'  
 (*pati.52:26*)

**ānrikam** 1st person plural personal verb;  
 imperative/optative  
 'let us be contented/calm' (*aka.74:12*)

**āyīnam** (*narr.159:9*)  
**āyīnem** (*aka.262:13*)  
**āyīnēm** (*pura.141:9*)  
 'we became ...'

**ānricin** imperative/optative  
 'be contented/calm' (*kuri:34*)

**ākuvai**  
 'you will become ...'  
 (*pura.236:5*)

**āka**  
 'May ... become ...'  
 (*pura.209:19*)

**ākuka**  
 'May ... become ...'  
 (*aka.203:18*)

	<b>ākarka</b> 'May it not become ...' ( <i>aink.4:6</i> )
<b>ānā</b> negative adjectival participle '... which is not contented' ( <i>matu.211-214</i> )	<b>ākā</b> 'which will not be ...' ( <i>narr.109:5</i> )
<b>ānā</b> 3rd person neuter plural 'they are not contented' ( <i>pati.47:8</i> )	<b>ākā</b> 'they will not ...' ( <i>pati.53:21</i> )
<b>ānātu</b> negative adverbial participle 'without being contented/calm' ( <i>aka.3:10</i> )	<b>ākātu</b> 'without being ...' ( <i>kuṛu.27:3</i> )
<b>ānāy</b> 2nd person singular personal verb; participial noun 'you (who) are not contented/satisfied' ( <i>aka.375:2; narr.193:3</i> )	<b>āyinaī</b> 'you have become ...' ( <i>pari.52:26</i> )
<b>ānravar</b> 3rd person pl. participial noun 'X who are contented' ( <i>pari.19:3</i> )	(not attested)
<b>ānrōr</b> 3rd person pl/hon. participial noun 'X who is/are contented' ( <i>narr.233:8</i> )	(not attested)
<b>ānrōl</b> 3rd person feminine participial noun 'she who is contented' ( <i>pati.55:1</i> )	(not attested)

B) The following are the classical Tamil negative forms of **ān** which are likely to be confused with identical positive forms of **ā** in modern Tamil:

**ānīr**: (2nd person honorific)

āmpal kuṟunar nīr vēṭṭānku ivaḷ iṭai mulai k kiṭantum **naṭuṅkal ānīr**  
(*kuṟu.178:3-4*)

[**naṭuṅkal** ‘trembling, shaking, shivering’

< **naṭuṅku** ‘to tremble, shake, shiver’

**ānīr** ‘you will not cease to ... ; you will not stop ... ‘

< **ān** ‘to be content’ + **īr** PNG]

‘Although you are lying between her breasts, **you do not stop shivering** (out of thirst of passion) just as those who pick water-lilies wish for (drinking) water.’

‘Although you are lying between her breasts, you shudder relentlessly just like those who pick water-lilies are thirsty for drinking water.’

**ānāl**: (3rd person feminine)

**palavum viṇaval ānāl āki** ... allal uḷappō! (*pura.160:24-25, 26*)

[**pala** ‘many things’; **viṇaval** (verbal noun) ‘enquiry, asking’

< **viṇa** ‘to enquire’

**ānāl** ‘she will not stop’ < **ān** ‘to be content’ + **āl** PNG;

**āki** advp of **āku** ‘to become’]

‘she (my wife) who is distressed, **having become someone who is not contented with asking** (our child to do) **many things** (in order to distract him from being hungry)’

‘she (my wife) who is distressed, asking relentlessly (our child to do) many things (in order to distract him from being hungry)’  
(Note that this example clearly shows that ānāḷ and āki cannot be derived from the same root.)

ānār: (3rd person human plural)

ānān: (3rd person masculine)

**aṭṭu ānānē** kuṭṭuvaṇ aṭu toṟum **perṟu ānārē** paricilar kaḷirē ... tol  
nakar varaippin avan urai āṇāvē (pati.47:1-2, 8)

[**aṭṭu** advp of **aṭu** ‘to kill, conquer’;

**perṟu** advp of **peru** ‘to obtain’; **urai** ‘words’

**ānān** ‘he will not stop’ < **ān** ‘to be content’ + **ān** PNG;

**ānār** ‘they will not stop’ < **ān** ‘to be content’ + **ār** PNG]

‘(The king) Kuṭṭuvaṇ **did not stop killing** (his enemies). The suppliants **did not stop receiving** male elephants (as gifts from him). Words of (his) praise **did not stop** (being spoken) in the region of his ancient city.’

C) The following classical Tamil past/completive forms of **ā** ‘to be’ provide the clue that the **n** in them is the contracted form of **in**:

ānatu: (3rd person neuter singular personal verb)

naṟavu uṇṭār mayakkam pōl kāmam **vēru oru pārru ānatu** kollō  
cīṟaṭi c cilampu āṟppa iyaliyāl ivaḷ maṇṇō inī maṇṇum pulampūra  
p pulleṇṇa vaṇappināḷ ... (kali.147:2-5)

[**vēru** ‘different’; **oru** ‘one’;

**pārru** adjectival noun < **pāl** ‘section, side’;

**vēru oru pārru** ‘that which is on a different side’

**ānatu** < \***āyinatu** ‘it became’ < **āy** advp of **ā** + **in** + **atu** PNG;



**vēru oru pārru ānatu** ‘it has become something that belongs to a different side’]

‘**Has** (her lover’s) **passion turned to a different side** like the delusion of those who drank toddy? Alas, she used to go around (happily with) her anklets sounding on her small feet. Now, as loneliness surrounds her and her lustrous beauty gone, ... ’

**ānāl**: (conditional “if”)

āyar **emar ānāl** āyttiyēm yām (kali.108:9)

[ā ‘to be’; **ānāl** < \*āyīnāl < āy + īn + āl]

‘**If our kin are cowherds, we are cowherdesses.**’

**ānum**: (concessive of fact “although”)

nin **tavaru illānum** kaḷaiñar il nōy ceyyum kaviṇ aṛintu aṇintu tam  
vaḷamaiyāl pōttanta numar tavaru il eṇpāy (kali.58:8-10)

[nin **tavaru** ‘your fault’; **illānum** < il ‘to be non-existent’ + \***ānum**  
\***ānum** < \*āyīnum ‘although’ < āy + īn + um]<sup>1</sup>

‘**Although it is not your fault**, do you (mean to) say that it is not/neither the fault of your kin, who know that your fascinating beauty would give incurable (love)sickness (to the onlookers) and still let you go dressed up (like this) because of their (pride of) wealth?’

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar’s commentary on *kali.58:16*, where he says that **āyīnum** is reduced as **ānum**.

ānum: (concessive of supposition “even if”)

ennānum pātu enīn pātavum vallēn (kali.140:13)  
 [ennānum ‘whatever it is’ < en ‘what’ + \*ānum  
ānum < \*āyinum ‘even if’ < āy + in + um]  
 ‘Whatever it is, if you tell me “Sing,” I am even capable of singing.’

A similar reduction process (in > n) is observed in the form mēyina which becomes mēna: puravē oḷḷilai makalīroṭu maḷḷar mēna ‘The small forests were occupied by your warriors and women with bright ornaments’ (pati.13:20-21). Here, mēna is derived from \*mēyina ‘were occupied’ < mēy (advp of mē ‘to fill, spread, occupy’) + in + a PNG.

A Result of the Reduction (in > n)

In due course, the reduction from in to n led to the derivation of forms such as āna, ānavar ‘one who is ...’, ānālum ‘although’, etc. in later Tamil. They are, in fact, contracted forms of āyina, \*āyinar, \*āyinālum, etc. Except āyina (pati.19:18), these forms are not attested in classical Tamil.

Furthermore, this contraction led some later forms which are positive to bear a similarity to classical Tamil negative forms. For example, the positive form ānēn ‘I became ...’, which is used in a later text, maṇi.21:22, is similar to the classical Tamil negative form ānān. Unlike the classical form, it is a contracted form and is derived from ā (āy advp. of ā ‘to be’ + in + ēn PNG). Note that the non-contracted form āyinēn ‘I became ...’ is also used in the same later text: ayarppatu ceyyā aṟivinēn āyinēn ‘I became someone with a knowledge that does not fade’ (maṇi.23:93).

Special N.

The ea :  
 ts, provide  
 i alavaika  
 rest of log  
 alanē ān  
 ). Here,  
 ch/who be  
 essions li  
 Now, c  
 ern Tamil  
 māna (mānōca  
 ssical Tamil  
 eaning is  
 eaning  
 from the  
 e under  
 read (in  
 ontracted  
 a related  
 In the f  
 l in post-  
 l forms:  
 ern Tamil  
 ough it is  
 al, ānavar,  
 and ānē

Post-c  
 tands  
 this w  
 versio  
 meaning  
 inal ana  
 lassical  
 yina (<  
 ānāl (co  
 or cen  
 ānatu,  
 ānān, āi

Arden:193.

## SECTION 7

### A Special Note on the Form “āṇa”

The earliest attestations of the form **āṇa**, occurring in post-classical texts, provide an adjectival participle sense ‘... which/who became ...’: **ēṇai aḷavaikaḷ ellām karuttiṇil āṇa muṛaimai** ‘the manner in which all the rest of logic has become a part of one’s intent/thinking’ (*maṇi.29:56*); **kāvalanē āṇa-k-kāl** ‘while he has become a protector’ (*muttolḷāyiram* 92:3). Here, **āṇa** is a contracted version of the classical form **āyina** ‘... which/who became ... .’ This kind of **āṇa** is witnessed in modern Tamil expressions like **avar ācīriyar āṇa pōtu** ‘when he became a teacher.’

Now, consider the other kind of **āṇa** which is added to nouns in modern Tamil to generate adjectives like **aḷakāṇa** (**aḷaku** + **āṇa**) ‘beautiful’, **mōcamāṇa** (**mōcam** + **āṇa**) ‘bad’, etc.<sup>2</sup> Note that this **āṇa** is not attested in classical Tamil and when it does occur for the first time in a later text, the meaning is ‘... which is filled with ... .’ The earliest occurrence of this **āṇa** meaning ‘... which is filled with ... .’ is found in one of the didactic texts from the post-classical period: **kōḷ uṇamtāl tattuvam āṇa neṛi paṭarum** ‘If one understands the precept, the path (which is) filled with reality will spread (in this world)’ (*nāṇmaṇikkaṭikai* 27:2-3). This **āṇa** seems to be a contracted version of the classical form **āṇra** ‘that which is contented’ with a related meaning ‘X which is filled with ... .’

In the final analysis, it can be said that the form “**āṇa**” which is found in post-classical and modern Tamil owes its sources to two classical Tamil forms: **āyina** (< **ā** ‘to be’) and **āṇra** (< **āṇ** ‘to be content’). And modern Tamil **āṇāl** (conditional “if it is”), **āṇālum** (concessive of fact “although it is” or concessive of supposition “even if it is”), **āṇavan**, **āṇavaḷ**, **āṇavar**, **āṇatu**, and **āṇavai** (participial nouns such as “he who is,” etc.), and **āṇēn**, **āṇān**, **āṇār**, etc. (personal verbs such as “I became ...,”

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Arden:193.

etc.) owe their source to classical Tamil ā 'to be.' And, more importantly, classical Tamil negative verbs ānēn, ānān, ānār, etc. ought to be understood as different from identical modern Tamil positive forms.



## SECTION 7





## ADVERBS

**GENERAL:** Nominal and verbal forms which modify a verb in terms of distance, time, place, manner, and degree are here treated as “adverbs.”<sup>1</sup>

**FORMATION:** There is more than one way to express an adverbial notion in classical Tamil.

(i) by using the bare stem;

(ii) by suffixation :

(a) **i** or **ku** is added to certain adjectival stems;

---

<sup>1</sup> “Properly speaking, the Dravidian languages have no adverbs at all. Every word that is used as an adverb in the Dravidian languages is either a noun declinable or indeclinable, or a verbal theme, or the infinitive or gerund of a verb” (Caldwell: 555-556). Andronov (page 247) says, “Adverbs, that is unchangeable words with adverbial meanings, are not numerous in Tamil. For the most part these are adverbs of place, adverbs of manner and (less frequently) adverbs of time.”

(b) **ā(ka)**, **āṅku**, **āy**, **i**, **in**, **um**, **ena**, and **ai** are added to other stems<sup>2</sup>

(iii) by extending the use of an infinitive, an adverbial participle, or a neuter singular adjectival noun.

### EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: using the bare stem

ūr cēyttu eṇātu ... emminum viraintu **val eyti** ... nal il ... ninrōḷ eyti  
 ... pinṇakam tīṇṭi ... tōyantaṇru kollō ... eṇ neñcē  
 (aka.9:15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 26)

[**val** ‘be capable, skilled’; **eytu** ‘to reach.’ As an adverb, **val** provides the sense ‘fastness.’ **vallai** (aiṅk.425:3), which is a variant of **val**, and **ollai** (pari.6:72) < **ol** ‘be possible’ are two other similar adverbs used in classical Tamil.]

‘Rushing more than I without thinking that (her) town is far away, **reaching** there **fast**, and reaching/approaching the woman who is waiting for me in our good house, did my heart touch and immerse in her back yet?’

---

<sup>2</sup> Most of these stems are nominal, as will be seen below. **ā(ka)** and **ena** are infinitive forms of **ā** and **eṇ**. See “Case Markers and Postpositions,” “The Particles,” and “Comparison” for various uses of these suffixes. The suffix **ai** is found rarely in forms like **vallai** and **ollai**.

Formation mechanism: suffixation

stem + ā(ka)/āñku/āy/i/in/um/ena/ku

*Suffix      Structure and Example*

**ā(ka):**

It is the infinitive form of ā ‘to be’ and has a variant āy. It is added to a nominal, which in most cases is an adjectival noun. Both ā(ka) and āy give the senses ‘in the manner of’, ‘for’, ‘with’, or ‘as.’ See also “Metonymy and Metaphor.”

(neuter singular negative adjectival noun + ā)

nī innātā t turattaliṇ

(kali.53:12)

[innātā ‘in a cruel manner’;

innātu ‘that which is not pleasant; cruel’ + ā ‘as, to be, in the manner of’]

‘since you are renouncing her **in a cruel manner**’

(neuter singular affirmative adjectival noun + āka)

niṇ vayiṇ cēri cērā varuvōrkku eṇṇum aruḷal vēṇṭum aṇṇu uṭaiyōy

eṇa k kaṇ inītāka k kōṭṭiyum tēralaḷ (narr.342:3-6)

[inītāka < inītu ‘that which is pleasant, sweet’ + āka]

‘She does not understand even if I **bend/slant and look at her sweetly** through the corner of my eyes saying “O affectionate one, you must be kind to those who come to your neighborhood.” ’

(verbal noun + glide + āka)

nī **nakaiyāka** t **tunī** **ceytu** nīṭiṇum tuṟappu aṇci k kaluḷpavaḷ

(kali.10:14-15)

[**nakaiyāka**

< **nakai** 'laugh' + glide y + **āka** 'to become, come into being']  
 'she whose eyes would be filled with tears, being afraid of your leaving even if you **sulk playfully** and continue to be in that state'

**āṅku**:

It is appended to a past/completive stem to provide an adverbial sense. When it is used as an adverb, it gives the sense 'thus, in the manner of.'

(past stem + **āṅku**)

pēey ayamotu **peṭṭāṅku** vaḷaṅkum kātu

(pura.238:4-5)

[**peṭṭāṅku** < **peṭṭ** (< **peḷ** 'to desire') + **āṅku**]

'forest where the demon/ghost together with its group moves around **as it wishes**'

'forest where the demons/ghosts move around **as they wish** together with their group'

**āy**: This is a variant of **ā(ka)**. See above.

(adjectival noun + **āy**)

mēkalai kāñci vāku valayam ellām kavaram **iyalpirrāy** t tennavan

onṇāruṭai pulam pukkaṟṟāl ... vaiyai vaṇappu (pari.7:47-50)

[**iyalpirrāy** < **iyalpirru** adjp (< **iyalpu** 'nature') + **āy** 'as, with']

'The beauty of (the flood in the river) Vaiyai is such that it is like the southern king entering into (his) enemies' lands, **with the nature**

of snatching women's (waist ornaments such as) *mēkalai* and *kāñci* and men's arm bracelets.'

(verbal noun + glide + *āy*)

*vīḷunarkku iṛaicciyāy viral kavarpu icaikkum kōl ēlum* (*kali.8:9-10*)  
 [*iṛaicciyāy* < *iṛaicci* 'inner substance' + glide *y* + *āy*]  
 'all the seven strings which, being plucked by the (musician's) fingers, sound **profound/substantial** to those who desire it'

*i*<sup>3</sup>:

(nominal stem + *i*)

*nikalnta vaṇṇam nī nāni uṇara c ceppal āṇriciṇ* (*kuri.33-34*)  
 [*nāni* < *nan* (oblique of *nal* 'good') + *i*]  
 'I am (here) to reply/speak clearly, **so that you understand it well** as it happened.'

*col iṇi maṭantai* (*narr.155:8*)  
 [*iṇi* 'now' < *iṇ* 'this moment, today' + *i*]  
 'Tell me **now**, young lady.'

(verbal stem + *i*)

*kuppai vēlai uppu ili ventatai maṭavōr kāṭci nāṇi* (*ciru.137-138*)  
 [*ili* 'without' < *il* 'to be absent' + *i*]  
 'embarrassed about ignorant people looking at the wild greens which boiled **without salt**'

---

<sup>3</sup> This might be historically related to the "past/completive marker" *i*.

**in:**

This is added to a neuter singular adjectival noun. It gives the sense 'as', and may be translated into English as "-ly."

(neuter singular affirmative adjectival noun + **in**)

nūl ari pulavar **nunṇitiṇ** kayīru iṭṭu t tēem koṇṭu ... perum peyar  
manṇarkku oppa maṇai vakuttu (neṭu:76-77, 78)

[**nunṇitiṇ** < **nunṇitu** 'that which is fine, nice' + **in**]

'The learned people, knowledgeable in the texts, **laid down the rope nicely**, selected the directions, defined the abodes appropriate for kings with great names, and ...'

ceṇrōrai ... **nallitiṇ** iyakkum avan cūrattu oḷukkam (malai:78, 80)  
[**nallitiṇ** < **nallitu** 'that which is good' + **in**]

'the behavior/conduct of his kith and kin who would escort the visitors/guests **in a good manner**'

vālitin virinta puṇ koṭi mucuṇṭai (malai:101)

[**vālitin** < **vālitu** 'that which is white' + **in**]

'the small mucuṇṭai vine, spread **in white**'

(oblique of neuter singular affirmative adjectival noun + **in**)

ariya ellām eḷitiṇiṇ koṇṭu ... vēṇṭu pulattu iṟuttu mēmpaṭa māṇiya  
vel pōr k kurucil (matu:145, 150-151)

[**eḷitiṇiṇ** < **eḷitu** 'that which is easy' + **in** + **in**]

'O Noble One, engaged in victorious wars, who **easily snatched / took hold** of all rare things (from different places) and camped wherever you wanted and fitted excellently.'

peruma **uritinin** koṇṭu āṅku p peyartal vēṇṭum (aka.10:7-8)  
 [**uritinin** < **uritu** ‘that which is proper, rightful’ + **in** + **in**]  
 ‘Lord, you must **take** (her) **by** your **right/claim** (for her) and move  
 away (to your town).’

**um**: This is appended to a neuter singular affirmative adjectival noun.

(neuter singular affirmative adjectival noun + **um**)

pirital eṇṇinai āyin **nanrum** aritu **urranaiyāl** peruma (aka.10:6-7)  
 [**nanrum** < **nanru** ‘that which is good’ + **um** (emphatic particle)]  
 ‘Lord, if you were to think of departing, **you have gotten** into  
 something very difficult.’

**peritum** varuntinai (aka.59:2, 3)  
 [**peritum** < **peritu** ‘that which is big’ + **um** (emphatic particle)]  
 ‘You are **grieving** very much.’

**ena**: The meaning of **ena** is ‘in the manner of, thus, so to say.’ See also  
 “Imitative Words.”

(nominal stem + **ena**)

kuṛuka vantu kuvavu nutal nīvi **mellena** t **talīiyinēn** (aka.49:6-7)  
 [**mellena** < **mel** ‘soft, gentle’ + **ena**]  
 ‘Coming close (to her) and caressing (her) curved forehead, I  
**hugged** her **gently**.’

(mutated stem + **ena**)

naṇi pacantanal **ena** viṇavuti atan tīram yāṇum **terrena** uṇarēn  
 (aka.48:3-4)  
 [**terrena** < **terr** (mutated stem) + **ena** < \***te**! ‘to be clear’ + **ena**]



‘You are enquiring me why she has turned very pale. I also do not understand the reason **clearly**.’

(It is also possible to interpret **atan tīram** to mean ‘its power.’)

**ku**: The only adjectival stem that takes this suffix to provide an adverbial sense is **nal** ‘good.’<sup>4</sup>

(adjectival stem + **ku**)

vilu p paṇṭam nāṭu āra **nan̄ku ilitarum** āṭu iyal peru nāvāy

(*matu*:81-83)

[**nan̄ku** < **nan̄** oblique of **nal** ‘good’ + **ku**]

‘the big swaying ship which is **sailing down nicely** for the country to be filled with the excellent things / supreme cargo’

Formation mechanism: extension

using adverbial participles, infinitives, or  
neuter singular adjectival nouns

### *Structure and Example*

Adverbial Participles

**ōṅki t tōnrum** uyar varai

(*aka*.42:13-14)

[**ōṅku** ‘to be lofty’; **tōnru** ‘to appear’]

‘the high mountain which **appears lofty**’

---

<sup>4</sup> Quite conceivably, direction words such as **kuṇakku** ‘east’, **kuṭakku** ‘west’, **vaṭakku** ‘north’, and **terku** ‘south’ can be said to contain this suffix.

**puḷ imiḷntu olikkum icai** (matu:111)  
 [imiḷ ‘to emit a low continuous sound, hum’; oli ‘to sound’]  
 ‘the music of birds **humming**’

### Infinitives

**kuṛuka vantu** kuvavu nutal nīvi melleṇa t taḷīyiṇēṇ (aka.49:6-7)  
 [kuṛuku ‘to get close’; vantu advp < var ‘to come’]  
 ‘**Coming close** (to her) and caressing (her) curved forehead, I  
 hugged her gently.’

notumalāḷaṇ neṇṇu **ara p perra eṇ** ciṛumutukkuṛaivi (aka.17:8-9)  
 [aru ‘to be completely cut off from its source’]<sup>5</sup>  
 ‘my long-awaited little girl who **won over** a stranger’s heart **com-**  
**pletely**’

nāṇiṇa(l) varuvōḷ vēṇṭāmaiṇiṇ **men mela vantu** ... ākam aṭaitantōḷē  
 (narr.308:3-4, 8)  
 [mel ‘soft, gentle, slow’]<sup>6</sup>  
 ‘She, who came bashfully, **came very slowly** and rested on my  
 chest because she did not like my departure.’

<sup>5</sup> Compare modern Tamil **aravē** (ara + glide v + ē) ‘completely.’ The word **ciṛumutukkuṛaivi** is normally interpreted to mean ‘a young woman who has ancient/old wisdom.’ Here it is interpreted differently to mean ‘long-awaited little girl’: **ciṛu** ‘small, little’; **mutu** ‘old, ancient’; **kuṛaivi** (adjectival noun) < **kuṛai** ‘what is needed, required’ + **vi** (adjectival noun suffix).

<sup>6</sup> The duplication **men mela** is for emphasis and/or to denote the repetition of the action. See “Doublets and Stacks” in “Notes on Miscellaneous Items” for a discussion of similar items.

uḷ il enṛūḷ viyaṇ kuḷam **niṛaiya** vīci p perum peyal **polinta** ... vaikaṛai  
(aka.42:8-10)

[**niṛai** 'to be full, fill up']

'daybreak (before) when big clouds **poured** heavily **filling** the wide empty tanks which were drying up in the scorching sun'

**puraiya** p **pūṇṭa** kōtai mārpinaḷ (aka.100:2)

[**purai** 'to be high, stack up']

'You have a chest with garlands which you have **worn high** (as a pile).'

vaṭa pāl cemponṇ malaiyiṇ **ciṛappa** t tōṇrum ... taḷarā irukkai  
(peru:240-241, 242)

[**ciṛa** 'to excel, surpass']

'unswerving residences which look **excellent** like the golden mountain (Mēru) in the north'

viṇai naṇṛu ātal **veruppa** k **kāṭṭi** (aka.33:1)

[**veru** 'to be overwhelmed']

'**showing decisively** that the act (of gathering wealth) will turn out to be good'

#### Neuter Singular Adjectival Nouns

neyyōṭu aiyavi appi **aitu uraittu** (tiru:228)

[**aitu** < **ai** 'soft, thin']

'smearing aiyavi (poppy seeds) with ghee and **chanting softly**'

avaṇ cāru ayar mūtūr cēyttum aṇru **cīritu** naṇiyatuvē (*cīru:201-202*)

[**cīritu** < **cīru** 'little, small']

'His ancient town celebrating festivities is not very far either. It is a **little close.**'

oru kai paḷḷi orṛi oru kai muṭiyōṭu kaṭakam cērtti **neṭitu** **ninaintu**

(*mull:75-76*)

[**neṭitu** < **neṭu** 'long, deep'; **ninai** 'to think']

'touching the bed with one arm, joining the bracelet on the other arm to the crown, and **thinking intensely** '

## COMPARISON

**GENERAL:** Actions, qualities, and results are the entities which enter into comparison. There seem to be three different ways of expressing what is normally understood by “degrees of comparison.” For example, if one wants to compare two things, A and B, one way is to say that “A is like B” or “A does \_\_ like B.” Another way is to say, “compared to B, A is \_\_.” Yet another way is to place A in a group and say that “Among many \_\_, A is \_\_.” For the purposes of this study, the first of these options is called “plain/basic comparison,” whereas the second and the last are referred to as the “comparative degree” and the “superlative degree” of comparison respectively.

### FORMATION:

- (a) Plain/Basic comparison is expressed by suffixation and periphrasis:

- (i) by suffixing **il/in** to the nominative or the oblique form of a noun and following it with a verb form or an appellative noun when an action is compared;
  - (ii) by placing B in apposition with A when a quality or an action is compared;
  - (iii) by placing certain verb stems or participles between the two things, A and B, and following them with a verb form or an adjectival noun when actions or qualities are compared.<sup>1</sup>
- (b) The comparative degree of comparison is expressed by suffixation and periphrasis:
- (i) by adding **inum** or **ku** to a nominative or the oblique form of a noun and following it with a verb form;
  - (ii) when a quality is compared, the adjective expressing the quality is nominalized and the nominalized form follows the suffix **in** or **ku**.
- (c) The superlative degree of comparison is expressed by suffixation: **uḷḷum** is added to the plural form of a noun.

No person-number-gender distinction, nor a distinction between affirmation and negation is made by the affixes **il**, **in**, **inum**, **uḷḷum**, and **ku**.

---

<sup>1</sup> These participles (e.g., **pōla** 'resembling') are usually taken as given lexical items or are treated as "particles." Note that only a few examples of verb stems which are placed between A and B for comparison are given below. Some other verbs which are used for comparison are **uraḷ**, **kaṭu**, and **ēy** as in **uraḷa**, **kaṭuppa**, and **ēyppa**.

## EXAMPLES

### Plain/Basic comparison

(A and B are in apposition)

**tuvar vāy** (*poru*:27)  
 [tuvar ‘coral’; vāy ‘mouth’]  
 ‘coral (like) lips’

### Verb Form/Suffix

### Structure and Example

#### **anna:**

**anna** is basically a participle (< \*an ‘to be of that nature’). It is followed by a nominal and so can be thought of as an adjectival participle. However, it is considered as a particle of comparison in the tradition.

(nominative stem + **anna** + nominal)

nīr p paṭu paruntin irum **ciraku anna** nilam tin citāar (*pati*.12:19-20)  
 [ciraku ‘wings’; citāar ‘rag’]  
 ‘piece of rag, eaten by mud, which is like the big wings of a vulture suffering in (the rain) water’

nī vāṭtal īyā vaḷaṇ aru **paitiram anna āyiṇa paḷaṇam** tōrum ...  
 tāmarai āmpaloṭu malarntu (*pati*.19:17-20)  
 [paitiram ‘green fields’; paḷaṇam ‘(cultivated) fields’]  
 ‘as lotuses bloomed together with water-lilies in every field which turned out to be like the green fields (of your enemies) on which you did not bestow (good) living’

(oblique stem + **anna** + nominal)

**maṇi k kalattanna mā itaḷ neytal** (pati.30:2)

[**kalam** ‘vessel, pot’; **neytal** ‘blue water-lily’]

‘blue water-lilies which are like a vessel of blue gems’

**arakkattanna nuṇ maṇal kōṭu** (pati.30:27)

[**arakku** ‘sealing wax’; **maṇal kōṭu** ‘sand heap’]

‘fine sand heaps which are (red) like lacquer’

**muttin anna veḷ vī** (aka.335:20)

[**muttu** ‘pearl(s)’]

‘white flowers which are like pearls’

(oblique stem + case marker + **anna** + nominal)

**kāciṇai anna ... kaṇi** (kuru.274:2)

[**kācu** ‘coin’; **kaṇi** ‘fruit(s)’; **kāciṇ** oblique stem]

‘fruits which are like coins’

(past/completive stem + **anna** + nominal)

**kōṭu vārntanna veṇ pū t tālai** (narr.203:4)

[**vār** ‘to slice, comb’; **veṇ pū** ‘white flower’; **kōṭu** ‘tusks, conch’]

‘screw-pines with white flowers which look like sliced tusks/conches’

**anaiya**: It is a variant of **anna**.

(nominal + **anaiya** + nominal)

**aruntati anaiya karpiṇ ... tāy** (aink.442:4-5)

‘mother who has profundity/chastity like Aruntati’



**āṅku:** It basically means ‘thus, in that manner.’ See also “Adverbs.”

(past/completive stem + **āṅku** + verb)

arimāṇ vaḷaṅkum cāral piṛa māṇ ... iṇa nirai **neṅcu atirntāṅku** ...  
neṭu nakar aracu tuyil īyātu **mātiram paṇikkum** maṛam vīṅku  
pal pukaḷ (*pati.12:5-8*)

[**neṅcu** ‘heart’; **atir** ‘to tremble, shudder’; **mātiram** ‘directions’;  
**paṇi** ‘to shake’]

‘your fame, enhanced by your valor which **makes the directions tremble** without providing sleep to the (enemy) kings in their big palaces, just as on a mountain slope, where the king of animals / the lion moves around, **the hearts** of other animal groups **quake**’

vicumpu āṭu aṇṇam **parai nivantāṅku** p polam paṭai p polinta **veṇ**  
**tēr ēri** ... ceṇṇaṇṇē (*kuṛu.205:2-3, 5*)

[**parai** ‘flying’; **niva** ‘to soar’; **veṇ tēr** ‘white chariot’;  
**ēru** ‘to climb on’]

‘Like the swans, playing in the sky, **soared in their flight**, he **climbed onto the white chariot** decorated with gold and left.’

**il:**

(nominative stem + **il** + verb)

muṛuṅkai vāṇ pū ... **uṭai tirai** p pitirvil **poṅki** muṇ kaṭal pōl tōṇṛala  
kāṭu (*aka.1:16, 18-19*)

[**uṭai** ‘to break’; **tirai** ‘waves’; **pitirvu** ‘scattering’;  
**poṅku** ‘to overflow’]

‘forest, where the big white flowers of the muṛuṅkai trees **overflow like the scattering / scattered drops of the breaking waves** and appear like the front of the ocean’

‘forests, which appear like the front of the ocean, where the big white flowers of the *murunkai* trees **overflow like the scattering/scattered drops of the breaking waves**’

**in:**

(nominative stem + **in** + verb)

**muracam ... urumin** urarupu **cilaippa** oru tām ākiya perumaiyōr  
(*pura.366:1, 3-4*)

[**muracam** ‘royal drum’; **urum** ‘thunder’; **cilai** ‘to sound deep’]  
‘great people who became unique (in power), (their) **royal drums** roaring **deep like thunder**’

(nominative stem + **in** + nominal)

nilam nīr vaḷi vicumpu **enṇa nānkin aḷappu ariyaiyē** (*pati.14:1-2*)  
[**nānku** ‘four, the four things’; **aḷappu** ‘measuring’;  
**aru** ‘to be difficult’]

‘You are **difficult to be measured as the four**, namely, the earth, the water, the wind, and the sky.’

**e(n)na:**

**e(n)na** is basically a participle (< **en** ‘to utter, make a statement’). It is followed by a verb and so can be thought of as a verbal participle. However, it is considered to be a particle of comparison in the tradition.

(nominative stem + **e(n)na** + verb)

kāṇ taku **matī enṇa k katir viṭu taṇmai** (*kali.100:4*)  
[**matī** ‘moon’; **viṭu** ‘to release/emit’]

‘the **cool of the rays emitted like the moon** which is beautiful to look at’

‘the **cool of shining like the moon** that is pleasing to the eyes’

**pon ena ... naṟu vī tāam ... punnai** (aka.360:17-19)

[**pon** 'gold'; **vī** 'flowers'; **tā** 'to scatter, spread']

'the punnai (tree) whose fragrant flowers (with pollen) spread like gold'

(past/completive stem + **enna** + verb)

piṭiyotu kaḷiru **punarntenna** kuṟu neṭum tūmpoṭum muḷavu p **punarntu icaippa** (aka.301:16-17)

[**punar** 'to join'; **icai** 'to sound']

'the short pipes and the long pipes **joined** the drums **and sounded** like a bull elephant **joined** its female elephant'

**nēr:**

(nominative stem + **nēr** + nominal)

**pon nēr pacalai** (aka.172:18)

[**pon** 'gold'; **pacalai** 'lovesick pallor']

'lovesick pallor **matching** gold'; 'lovesick pallor **like** gold'

**purai:**

(nominative stem + **purai** + nominal)

**vēy purai paṇai t tōḷ** (aka.2:11)

[**vēy** 'bamboo'; **tōḷ** 'shoulder(s)/arm(s)']

'firm rounded **shoulders/arms** which are **like bamboos**'

**pōl(a):**

(nominative stem + **pōl** + verb)

vimmi **aṟal pōl ... mulai nanaippa ... evaṇ niṇaipu vāṭuti**

(narr.208:1-4)

[**aṟal** 'black sand'; **nana** 'to wet']

'As you are sobbing and tears **wet** your breasts **like water on black sand**, what are you thinking about and wilting?'

(nominative stem + **pōla** + verb)

**niṇ munṇiṇai mutalvar pōla niṇru nī ... tavāaliyarō**

(*pati.14:19-20, 22*)

[**mutalvar** ‘the first people, chief people, ancestors’;

**tapu > tav(u)** ‘to perish’]

‘**Like the ancestors** of your clan / previous group of kin, **may you** stay, prevail, and **not perish.**’

**kūval kurāl āṇ paṭu tuyar irāvil kaṇṭa uyartiṇai ūman pōla t tuyar**  
**porukkallēn tōḷi nōykkē** (*kuru.224:3, 5-6*)

[**ūman** ‘a mute person’; **poru** ‘to bear with, tolerate, withstand’]

‘**Like a human mute** who is witnessing at night the agony of the brown cow which has fallen into the well, I am **not able to bear with** the suffering due to this (love)sickness.’

**maruḷ**: Literally, it means ‘bewildered, be puzzled.’

(nominative stem + **maruḷ** + nominal)

**vēy maruḷ paṇai t tōḷ**

(*aka.1:8*)

[**vēy** ‘bamboo’; **tōḷ** ‘shoulder(s)/arm(s)’]

‘firm rounded **shoulders/arms** (which are) **like bamboos**’

‘firm rounded **shoulders/arms** which **bewilder the bamboos**’

**māṇa**:

(nominative stem + **māṇa** + verbal)

**uri kaḷai aravam māṇa t tāṇē aritu cel ulakil cenṛanan**

(*pura.260:20-21*)

[**aravam** ‘snake’; **cenṛanan** ‘he left’ < **cel** ‘to go, leave for’]

‘**Like a snake** peeling its skin, he left for the rare world (of the gods).’

## Comparative Degree

### *Marker     Structure and Example*

**in:** See “Case Markers and Postpositions” and “Notes on Miscellaneous Items” for other uses of **in**.

(oblique stem + **in** + nominal)

**itanin koṭiyatu piritu onru illai** (narr.322:2)

[**itan** < **itu** ‘this one’ + **an**; **koṭiyatu** ‘that which is cruel’]

‘There is nothing else which is **more cruel than this one**.’

**inum:**

(oblique stem + **inum** + nominal)

**ninninum maṭavaḷ ... annai** (aka.259:15-16)

[**nin** oblique of **nī** ‘you’; **maṭavaḷ** ‘she who is ignorant’]

‘your mother, **who is more ignorant/naive than you**’

(non-oblique stem + **inum** + verb)

**tūkkaṇaṅkurī nīṭu irum peṇṇai t toṭutta kūṭinum mayaṅkiya maiyal**  
**ūr** (kuru.374:5-7)

[**kūṭu** ‘nest’; **mayaṅku** ‘to be confused; tangled’; **ūr** ‘town’]

‘**the confused town** which is **more tangled/confused than the nest** which the tailor-bird strung on the tall dark **peṇṇai** (palm) tree’

(Note that the word **kūṭu** ‘nest’ appears in its nominative form, not in its oblique form **kūṭtu**, as in modern Tamil.)

(oblique stem + **inum** + verb)

**pirinta namminum iraṅki arum poruḷ muṭiyātu āyinum varuvar**

(narr.208:9-10)

[**nam** < **nām** ‘we’; **iraṅku** ‘to sympathize, show empathy’]

**‘Feeling more sympathetic than we who are separated (from him), he will return even if the precious wealth (he is seeking) is not obtained.’**

**numminum** tān peritu **uvanta** uḷḷamōṭu ... iṇitu nōkki (*malai:559-560*)  
 [num (oblique stem) < \***nun** ‘your’ (singular); **uva** ‘to be delighted’]  
**‘he will look at you sweetly with a heart which is much more delighted than you, and ...’**

**ku:** See “Case markers and Postpositions” and “Adverbs” for other uses of **ku**.

(nominative stem + **ku** + nominal)  
**vāliyōrku** avan **īlaiyan** (*pari.2:20-21*)  
 [vāli (name of a mythological character);  
**īlaiyan** ‘one who is younger’]  
**‘He is younger than Vāliyōn (Balarāman).’**

## Superlative Degree

### *Marker      Structure and Example*

**uḷḷum:** See also “Case Markers and Postpositions.”

(plural noun + **uḷḷum** + verbal)  
 vicumpu vaḷaṅku **maḷaliruḷḷum** ciraṅta cemmiṇ aṇaiyaḷ (*pati.31:27-28*)  
 [maḷalir ‘women’; cira ‘to excel, surpass; to be eminent’]  
**‘She is like the red star (Arunṭati) which is the most excellent among the women who move around in the sky (in the form of stars).’**

## IMITATIVE WORDS

**GENERAL:** Classical Tamil poems abound with certain words which are used basically to imitate or describe sounds, qualities, states of being, or actions. These words function like adverbs of comparison which compare two or more items on the basis of their attributes and actions. Tamil grammatical tradition does not provide a technical term for these words, which are here called “imitative words.”

**USAGE:** The quotative **en** ‘thus, to be in the manner of, to utter’ is suffixed to imitative words, and the “imitative stem” thus derived is used as a verb stem. Only a few examples are given below.

## EXAMPLES

Formation mechanism: imitative word + **en** \_\_\_\_

*Imitative Item*                      *Structure and Example*

**ilum**: It describes certain sounds.

(**ilum** + **en**)

**ilum en cummai iṭaṇ uṭai varaippu** (poru:65)  
 [**cummai** ‘noise’]  
 ‘the noise (which sounds like) “**ilum**” ’

(**ilum** + **eṇa**)

**cēṇ niṇṇu ilum eṇa iṭitarum aruvi** (tiru:315-316)  
 [**eṇa** < **en**; **iṭitaru** ‘to flow down’; **aruvi** ‘waterfall’]  
 ‘the waterfall which flows down from a very long distance echoing  
 (the sound) **ilum**’

**ñerēr**: It describes or imitates the suddenness of actions and sounds.

(**ñerēr** + **eṇa**)

**imaiṭṭōr viṭitta māṭṭirai ñerēr eṇa k kuṇakku eḷu tiṅkaḷ kaṇai iruḷ  
 akaṇṇa** (pura.376:7-8)  
 [**eṇa** < **en**; **iruḷ akaṇṇa** ‘to remove the darkness’]  
 ‘as the moon, rising in the east, removed the thick darkness instantly  
 in a moment (that would normally take for) those who were closing  
 their eyes to open’



ālaitoṟum ñerēr ena k kaḷai ... uṭaikkum karumpiṇ ēttam  
(malai:340-341)

[ena < en; kaḷai ‘cane’; uṭaikkum adjp of uṭai ‘to break’]  
‘the sound of sugarcanes that are being broken fast at every mill’

**tel:** It refers to the clarity of actions.

(terr + ena)

ataṇ tiṟam yānum terrena uṇarēṇ (aka.48:3-4)  
[terr mutated stem < teḷ ‘to be clear’; uṇar ‘to realize, understand’]  
‘I too did not clearly understand its nature.’

**mel:** It describes soft, slow, gentle, and subdued qualities or actions.

(mel + ena)

celva cēṟum em tol pati p peyamtu eṇa mellena k kiḷantaṇam āka  
(poru:121-122)

[ena < en; kiḷantaṇam ‘we said’]  
‘As we said softly and slowly, “Lord, we will proceed toward our ancient hometown,” ...’

**pul:** It describes a lifeless or lusterless quality.

(pul + enra)

curam pullenra āṟra (aka.1:15)  
[enra < en; āṟra adjectival noun < āṟu ‘path, way’ + a]  
‘The forests have paths which are lifeless.’

(pul + enrāl)

poruḷ illāṇ iḷamai pōl pul enrāl (kali.38:15)

[enrāl 3rd person feminine personal verb < en]

‘she who became lifeless like the youth of a man without money’

**pai:** It describes soft and gentle actions.

(pai + ena)

paiyena k kaṭavuḷ vāḷtti [ena < en] (aka.14:15-16)

‘praising the god softly’

## METONYMY AND METAPHOR

**GENERAL:** Metonymy and metaphor are figures of speech in which one thing is spoken of as if it were another. Explicit markers of comparison between entities are absent here.<sup>1</sup>

**FORMATION:** Metonymy and metaphor are expressed through two mechanisms.

(i) by extension:

a) using a word that is related to the intended referent

---

<sup>1</sup> The traditional terms for metonymy are **ākupeyar** and **anmolittokai**. The term for metaphor is **uruvakam**.

**ākupeyar** literally means 'a name which has become (the name for another)'; **anmolittokai** 'a compound of other words' means that it is a compound the individual meanings of whose members are not the same as that of the sum total. In Tamil, **uruvakam** means 'a house for a form.' Normally, **uruvakam** is derived from Sanskrit **rūpaka**. Cf. *The Madras Tamil Lexicon*, page 449.

in terms of its source, place, time, part, attribute, or action;

b) using a nominal compound;

(ii) by periphrasis:

(a) placing two nouns in apposition which are sometimes followed by the infinitive *ā(ka)* with the sense 'as (it is), as it becomes.'

## EXAMPLES

Formation mechanisms: suffixation

using a related word

using a nominal compound

noun + noun ± *ā(ka)*

### *Structure and Example*

#### A Related Word

*pārvai yātta parai tāl viḷavu* (peru:95)

[*pārvai* 'viewing' is a verbal noun < *pār* 'to view']

'the *viḷa* tree with a worn-out trunk onto which a seeing (animal) / trap animal is tied'

(In this context *pārvai* refers to an animal [deer] used as an object for show. Such animals are used in hunting to attract and trap other animals.)

*turuvaiyoṭu veḷḷai cēkkum ... varaippu* (peru:153-154)

[*veḷḷai* 'white' is an adjective. Here it refers to an animal (sheep) which is white.]

'the village where the white (sheep) lies down / goes to sleep with the red sheep'

cūr **maruṅku** aṟutta cuṭar ilai neṭu vēl ... murukaṇ (*aka.59:10*)

[**maruṅku** ‘vicinity, side.’ Here it refers to people in the vicinity, kith and kin.]

‘Murukaṇ, with a long spear with a shining leaf, who cut off / killed the kith and kin of the demon Cūr’

### Nominal Compound

**tiruntiḷai** kaṇava

(*pati.24:11*)

[**tiruntiḷai** ‘perfect ornaments’

< **tiruntu** ‘to be perfect’ + **iḷai** ‘ornaments’

Here it refers to a woman (the queen) wearing those perfect ornaments.]

‘O the husband of the woman wearing perfect ornaments.’

(Note that this is a compound which is normally referred to as an **anmolittokai**.)

Noun + Noun: Each noun can be a compound.

**mānilamaṭantai**

(*cīru:1*)

[**mānilamaṭantai** < **mā nila(m)** + **maṭantai**

**mā** ‘vast’ + **nilam** ‘earth’ + **maṭantai** ‘lady’]

‘the Lady Earth’

**kuḷavippaḷḷi**

(*cīru:46*)

[**kuḷavippaḷḷi**

< **kuḷavi** ‘wild jasmine’ + **paḷḷi** ‘bed/place for reclining’]

‘bed of wild jasmine vine’

**pāmpaṇaippaḷḷi**

(*peru:373*)

[**pāmpaṇaippaḷḷi** < **pāmpaṇai** + **paḷḷi**

< **pāmpu** ‘snake(s)’ + **aṇai** ‘support’ + **paḷli** ‘bed/place for reclining’]  
**‘bed of snake(s)’**

**ikaiccennukam** (*ciṟu:113*)

[**ikaiccennukam** < **īkai** + **cennukam**  
 < **īkai** ‘bestowing, beneficence’ + **ce(m)** ‘perfect’ + **nukam**  
 ‘yoke/bondage’]  
**‘the perfect bondage of beneficence’**

**ellai tarunaṇ** (*poru:233*)

[**ellai tarunaṇ** ‘the sun’  
 < **ellai** ‘shine, brightness; limit, boundary’ + **tarunaṇ** ‘one who gives/provides’]  
**‘one who brings the shine’**; one who defines/brings the **limit** of daylight’

Noun + Noun + **āka**: The first noun is metaphorically spoken of as the second.

**vāḷ matil āka vēḷ miḷai uyarttu** (*pati.33:7*)

[**vāḷ matil āka** ‘the sword (serving) as a fortress’  
 < **vāḷ** ‘sword’ + **matil** ‘fortress’ + **āka** ‘being/as’]  
**‘raising a fence of spears with swords as the fortress’**

**kaṇṇīr aruvi āka aḷumē tōḷi avar paḷamutir kuṇṟē** (*narr.88:8-9*)

[**kaṇṇīr aruvi āka** ‘tears as a waterfall.’  
 < **kaṇṇīr** ‘tears’ + **aruvi** ‘waterfall’ + **āka** ‘as; as it becomes’]  
**‘My friend, his hill, where fruits are ripening, is crying with waterfall(s) as its tears.’**

**nāṇu t taḷai āka** vaiki māṇ viṇaikkū uṭampu āṇṭu oḷintamai allatai ...  
 neṇcam niṇ uḷaiyatuvē (*aka.29:21-23*)

[**nāṇu t taḷai āka** ‘bashfulness as a restraint’

< **nāṇu** ‘bashfulness’; **taḷai** ‘restraint, bondage’; **āka** ‘as’]

‘Except (for the fact) that my body was there, staying with **pride** as its **restraint** for the sake of the noble deed, my heart has (always) been with you.’

## NOTES ON MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

### Doublets and Stacks

Classical Tamil uses stems in a certain repetitive fashion that the resulting forms can be called “doublets” (*irattai-k-kilavi*) or “stacks” (*aṭukku*) after the tradition.<sup>1</sup> Traditional grammars and traditional commentators on classical Tamil poems seem to differ slightly in their consideration of these forms. The traditional grammar *Tolkāppiyam*, which is applicable to classical Tamil poetry, makes a distinction between these two types of “repetitives,” whereas traditional commentators on poetry do not comment on the first type, the doublets (cf. *Tolkāppiyam*, *collatikāram*, *Cēṇāvaraiyam*, Rules 48, 411, and 424; the Old Commentary on *pari.2:75*; 10:98).

---

<sup>1</sup> Modern scholars discuss similar forms in modern Tamil under the label “intensives”: e.g., “Some notes on Dravidian intensives,” by Murray B. Emeneau.



### Doublets (**iraṭṭai-k-kiḷavi**)

Three kinds seem to emerge in these forms. In the first kind, there is one stem with an adjectival quality which is repeated once. In the second, it is difficult to identify the repeated stem clearly as nominal or verbal. The third kind, which is different from the other two, has two stems which are nominal but convey opposite meanings.

One can determine their ultimate nominal or verbal quality in the first two kinds of doublets by the suffixes they take. It seems that the ultimate effect produced in the first kind is the intermittent characteristic or the intensity of the quality signified by the stem, while it is onomatopoeia in the second. In either case, a stem is repeated once resulting in a compound type (= stem<sub>1</sub> + stem<sub>1</sub>), and subsequently a suffix is added to the stem on the right. The suffix then turns the duplicated stem into a nominal or a verbal form. Note that the first kind (the adjectival type) is used elsewhere in non-duplicated forms, while the second kind (the onomatopoeic type) is not.

As an example of a doublet of the first kind, consider *timil cuṭar ... mīṇoṭu puraiya paipaya imaikkum tuṛaivaṇ* 'The man from the shore-land where the flames of the lamps **twinkle gently**/intermittently like the stars' (*narr.199:8-10*). Here, **pai** 'soft, slow, feeble' is the adjectival stem which is "doubled" as **pai + pai** and the suffix **a** is added yielding the adverbial form **paipaya** 'slowly and slowly.' Similarly, consider *iṇa vaṇṭu ... melmela icaikkum cāral* 'mountain slope where groups of bees **hum very softly** (now and then)' (*narr.176:8, 10*). Here, **mel** 'soft' is the adjectival stem which is duplicated as **mel + mel** and the suffix **a** is added subsequently yielding the adverbial form **melmela** 'softly and softly; softly and slowly.'

Now, consider *vaiyai taṇ nāṛṛam mītu taṭam poḷil tāṇ yāṛru vem nāṛru vēcaṇai nāṛṛam kutukutuppa* 'as the thick groves **kindled / bubbled up** a warm smell from the entering flood above/beyond the smell created by (the river) *Vaiyai ...*' (*pari.20:12-13*). This example illustrates the

second kind of doublets, which is based on onomatopoeia. Here, **kutukutuppa** is an infinitive derived from **kutu + kutu + ppa**. The meaning of **kutu** is not transparent.<sup>2</sup> Now, consider **makāar aṇṇa manti ... muttam ... eruntin vayirru akattu aṭakki ... umaṭṭiyar ... putalvaroṭu kilukili āṭum ... koṛkai** ‘Koṛkai, where monkeys which are (dear) like children, pack the oyster shells with pearls and use them as rattles in their play with the children of the salt-merchant women’ (*ciru:56-62*). Here, the word **kilukili** ‘rattle’ (**kilu + kilu + i**) is a nominal. Similarly, in **kiṇkiṇi kavaiya oṇ ceñ cīraṭi** ‘small bright red feet which are covered with small bells’ (*tiru:13*), **kiṇkiṇi** is a nominal derived from **kiṇ + kiṇ + i**. In the last two cases, the stems **kilu** and **kiṇ** give the onomatopoeic senses of rattling and jingling. Note that such stems are not used in classical Tamil poetry in a non-duplicated form.

The third type of doublet is basically different from the other two discussed above. In this type, two different nominal stems occur successively and seem to form a unit, so it has drawn the attention of traditional commentators. Both stems sound alike, and the stem on the right provides an opposite meaning to the one on the left. For example, consider **etir kutir ākinru atirppu** ‘The echo (**atirppu**) is becoming a substantial response to the confrontation’ (*pari.8:21*). In this context, **etir** means ‘facing, confrontation’ (verbal noun) originating from the stem **etir** ‘to confront’, whereas **kutir** means ‘substantial receptacle.’ Similarly, consider **ēru māru ērkum i-k-kunru** ‘This hill receives (**ērkum**) an acceptance/acknowledgement (**ēru**) as an opposition (**māru**)’ (*pari.18:6*). Here, **ēru** is derived from **ēl** ‘to accept, acknowledge, receive.’

---

<sup>2</sup> Quite conceivably, it means ‘bundling, shrugging’ and is related to **kūtir** which refers to the cold season. Cf. classical Tamil noun **kutir** which refers to a granary and modern Tamil usages **kutu kutu** ‘shrugging/shivering in a feverish state’ and **kutūkalam** ‘excitement.’ The Old Commentary on *pari.20:12-13* translates **kutukutuppa** as ‘wishing for’, the significance of which is not obvious.

In fact, there is nothing special about the constructions **etir kutir ākinru** and **ēru māru ērkum**, except that they contain pairs of words (**etir** and **kutir**; **ēru** and **māru**) which convey opposite meanings within the pair. In both formations, the first two words (**etir**, **kutir**; **ēru**, **māru**) can be perceived as the “objects” of the third word which is the main verb (**ākinru**, **ērkum**). More importantly, each of these words (**etir**, **kutir**, **ēru**, and **māru**) is used elsewhere in isolation with its specific meaning. One traditional commentator notes that **etir kutir** and **ēru māru** are **ulaka valakku** ‘worldly usages’ or “non-poetic usages” (cf. Parimēlaḷakar’s commentary on *pari.8:21* and *pari.18:6*).

### Stacks (**aṭukku**)

In a “stacked” construction, a nominal or a verbal form is repeated once or twice. The repeated nominal forms express a sense of multiplicity or distribution, while the repeated verb forms express intensity, certainty, urgency, and repetition of the action of the verb. This stacking technique seems to be somewhat productive in the sense that one finds in classical Tamil constructions in which the first form in the stack is a verbal noun which is followed by a finite form derived from the same stem, normally to express intense negation or a sense of unexpectedness/surprise. For examples of stacked constructions expressing possibility or probability, see “Concessive of Supposition.”

To understand how the sense of multiplicity is expressed by stacking, consider **nirai nirai piṭi cela** ‘as row after row (many herds) of female elephants passed by’ (*pari.2:26*). Here, the nominal **nirai** ‘row’ is repeated once to denote the multiplicity of the elephants. Consider, **kaṭumpoṭum kaṭumpoṭum** paravutum, literally, ‘Along with our relatives and relatives we pray to you’, meaning ‘We and the multitude of our kith and kin pray to you’ (*pari.2:75*). Note that here, the nominal **kaṭumpu** ‘relatives, family, kith and kin’ is declined first (**kaṭumpu** + **oṭu** associative case marker) to

which the particle **um** ‘and’ is added. Then the whole form **kaṭumpoṭum** is repeated once.

Now, notice the distributive sense expressed in the example **avar avar ēvalāḷanum** nīyē **avar avar cey poruṭku** araṇamum nīyē ‘You are the performer of **their** (= everyone’s) **respective** tasks. And you are the guard for **their respective deeds**’ (*pari.4:72-73*). Here, **avar** ‘they’ is repeated once and followed by **ēvalāḷan** to mean ‘performer of their/everyone’s respective tasks.’ Then it is followed by **cey poruḷ** to mean ‘their respective deeds.’ Similarly, consider **āṅka iṇpamum kavinūm aḷuṅkal mūtūr nanpala nanpala nanpala**. Literally, it means ‘Thus, the pleasure and beauty in the noisy ancient city are **good-many, good-many, good-many**.’ The repetition of **nanpala** ‘good many’ (< **nal** ‘good, lovely’ + **pala** ‘many’) denotes the multiplicity of good things in the city (of Madurai) mentioned in this context. Note that the form **nanpala** is repeated twice to make the stack. Now, consider **pētai piraṅkal iṭai iṭai p** pukku ‘the naive woman went between the rocks and ...’ (*pari.19:58-59*), which is slightly different. Here, **iṭai** ‘between’ is repeated once and follows **piraṅkal** to mean ‘between the rocks.’ Awkward as it may sound in English, it must be understood that the repetition **iṭai iṭai** means ‘between and between’, meaning that the woman mentioned here went more than once between more than two rocks.

Now consider an example illustrating intensity: **kōtai kōl āka iṛukiruka yāttu p** puṭaippa ‘as she **tied** (him) up **very tightly** and beat (him) up with her garland’ (*pari.9:39-40*). Here, **iṛukiruka** ‘very tightly’ is derived from the repetition of the infinitive **iṛuka** < **iṛuku** ‘to be tight.’ As another example, consider **māṇ pakali aram tin vāy pōnm pōnm pōnm**. ‘The fine arrows (i.e., women’s eyes) are **certainly** like the edges (i.e., blades of arrows) sharpened by a saw’ (*pari.10:97-99*). Here, the form **pōnm** ‘is like’ is repeated twice expressing the certainty of the comparison.

When an imperative form is stacked, there is a sense of urgency or hastiness in the expression. For example, consider **nillu nī nallāy makaḷirai**

mainturru amarpurra maintar akalam kaṭikuvēm enpavai yārkkāṇum muṭi-poruḷ anṛu **muniyal muniyal** ‘Stop, O lovely woman! It is not possible for anyone to abstain from the wide chests of strong men who, with strength, desire women. (So) **do not hate! Do not hate!**’ Here, the negative imperative form **muniyal** (< **muni** ‘to hate, dislike’ + **al** suffix) is repeated once giving a sense of urgency, haste, or anxiety. For another example of this kind, consider naṛum taṇ mārvaṇ **innini** vārā māru kol ... eṇ nutal pacappatu ‘My lovely forehead is turning pale. Is it in response to the fact that the man with a cool good-smelling chest is not here **right now** / has not yet come, I wonder’ (*aink.222:2, 3, 4*). Here, **innini** ‘right now’ is the result of duplicating **in** ‘now.’

As for the sense of a repetitive action, consider pāṭunar **koḷa-k-koḷa** k kuṛaiyā c celvattu c ceṛṛōr **kola-k-kola** k kuṛaiyā t tāṇai ‘wealth that has not become less (even) **as** the singers **took/received** it (again and again); the army that has not become less (even) **as** the enemies **killed** it (again and again)’ (*pati.82:12-13*). First, the infinitive **koḷa** ‘to take, receive’ is repeated once (**koḷa-k-koḷa**) expressing the repetition of the action and then another infinitive **kola** ‘to kill’ is repeated once (**kola-k-kola**) to convey a similar sense.

Consider kuṛavaṇ makaḷ **āṇai kūralō kūrēl** ‘Don’t you ever swear by the name of the woman (Vallī) from the hill-tribe’ (*pari.8:69*). First, **kūral**, which is a negative verbal noun (< **kūru** ‘to state/proclaim’) is followed by the particle **ō**. Then the verb **kūru** is used in the negative imperative form, **kūrēl** ‘do not proclaim’, to complete the stack. Similarly, consider **iṇi yāṇ uṇṇalum uṇṇēṇ vālalum vālēṇ** ‘Now, I won’t ever eat; I won’t ever live’ (*kali.23:7*). Here, **uṇṇalum uṇṇēṇ** is based on the verb stem **uṇ** ‘to eat’ and **vālalum vālēṇ** on **vāl** ‘to live/prosper/thrive.’ In each stack, the first form is a verbal noun (**uṇṇal** ‘eating’, **vālal** ‘living/thriving’), while the second is a negative finite verb (**uṇṇēṇ** and **vālēṇ**). Note that a particle (**um** ‘even’) intervenes between the two different verb forms (verbal noun and the finite verb).

## Certain Affixes

The affixes **a**, **an**, **i**, **icin**, **in**, **u**, **ai**, **(k)k**, **ñ**, **(t)t**, **n**, **(p)p**, **m**, **y**, and **v** occur in more than one grammatical context, and therefore might cause some puzzlement in the reader. Because of the variety of tasks they perform, their original significance is not easy to infer. These affixes are not the only items which serve more than one grammatical task in classical Tamil. Similar items which occur only at the end of a word are included in the "Appendix." The present section does not propose to resolve the puzzle. Rather, it alerts the readers to the existence of the puzzle and provides relevant information.

### **a:**

In addition to being a suffix, it occurs in morphophonemic situations as an enunciative vowel.

morphophonemic process	<b>verinattōl</b>	( <i>pari.21:5</i> )
	<b>vampa māri</b>	( <i>kuṟu.66:5</i> )

### **an:**

In addition to being a PNG, it occurs in the following contexts. Its basic function in nominal forms is to mark the obliqueness of the stem. Although it seems to carry the intrinsic meaning 'like', its significance in verb forms is not clear. In some contexts it seems to indicate a perfective aspect of the action denoted by the verb stem, but there is no consistent pattern.

adjectival noun	<b>kālana</b>	( <i>kuṟu.7:1</i> )
case form	<b>atanāl</b>	( <i>mull:17</i> )
non-past participial noun	<b>koḷvāna nāṭi</b>	( <i>kali.82:19</i> )
	<b>nīṇaivanaḷ</b>	( <i>kali.44:18</i> )

oblique stem	<b>ataṇ</b>	( <i>kali.52:3</i> )
past participial noun	<b>tuṇintaṇirkku</b>	( <i>kali.8:7</i> )
past personal verb	<b>kēṭṭaṇam</b>	( <i>mull.17</i> )
preceding a case marker/postposition	<b>ataṇ koṇṭu</b>	( <i>aka.32:9</i> )

**i:**

In addition to being a PNG, it occurs in the following contexts. In morphophonemic situations, it is enunciative. In other contexts, it seems to indicate the “totality” of a quality or “completion” of an action.

adjective	<b>periya</b>	( <i>pura.235:2</i> )
adverbial participle; past stem	<b>vīci</b>	( <i>matu.752</i> )
	<b>vakaii</b>	( <i>narr.120:5</i> )
causative form	<b>uṇṭiyiṇaḷ</b>	( <i>narr.8:5</i> )
morphophonemic process	<b>tantāriyār</b>	( <i>kali.84:32</i> )
	<b>nōṇṇiyar</b>	( <i>narr.22:6</i> )
	<b>tamiyaḷ</b>	( <i>aka.5:2</i> )
	<b>putitu</b>	( <i>kali.53:5</i> )
	<b>puttiyāṇai</b>	( <i>kali.97:7</i> )

**icin:**

Its original significance is not clear. Besides functioning as a PNG, it occurs in the following contexts.

imperative/optative	<b>vaṭitticin</b>	( <i>pura.180:13</i> )
past participial noun	<b>paṭaitticinōr</b>	( <i>pura.18:23</i> )
past personal verb	<b>ceṇṇricinōṇ</b>	( <i>narr.300:6</i> )
preceding a particle	<b>miḷimṭicināaṅku</b>	( <i>pura.139:13</i> )

**in:**

In addition to being a suffix, it occurs in the following contexts. It marks the obliqueness of the stem in nominal forms. As a case marker, it is used to denote a wide range of meanings. Its significance in verb forms is not clear. In some contexts it seems to indicate the perfective aspect of the action denoted by the verb stem, but there is no consistent pattern.

adjectival noun	erutt <u>ina</u>	( <i>pura</i> .387:7)
adjectival participle	āy <u>ina</u>	( <i>pati</i> .19:19)
case form	matiy <u>in</u> ukku	( <i>kuru</i> .395:4)
oblique stem	at <u>in</u>	( <i>pari</i> .11:36)
past participial noun	vēṇṭ <u>in</u> arkku	( <i>peru</i> :444)
past personal verb	vēṇṭ <u>in</u> am	( <i>aka</i> .26:15)
	kavaiiy <u>inaṇ</u>	( <i>aiṅk</i> .409:1)
preceding a case marker/postposition	pōḷt <u>in</u> kaṇ	( <i>kali</i> .82:10)

**u:**

Besides being a PNG and a verbal noun suffix, its basic function seems to be that of a formative/enunciative suffix.

adverbial participle	peytu	( <i>peru</i> :96)
morphophonemic process	nāṇukkuraivilaḷ	( <i>pari</i> .12:49)

**ai:**

In addition to being a PNG, it occurs in the following contexts. Its original significance is not clear.

accusative case form	ampalai nāṇi	( <i>kali</i> .3:1)
----------------------	--------------	---------------------



adverb	<b>vallai</b> ( <i>aink.425:3</i> )
morphophonemic process	<b>pārāṭṭaippāl</b> ( <i>kali.85:33</i> )
verbal noun	<b>naṭai</b> ( <i>narr.92:2</i> )

**k(u):**

In addition to being a case marker, it signifies the non-past/non-completive aspect of the action of the verb stem to which it is attached. It also has a non-causative/affective significance. It occurs in the following contexts.

adverb	<b>naṅku</b> ( <i>matu:82</i> )
comparison	<b>vāliyōṛku ... ilaiyaṅ</b> ( <i>pari.2:20-21</i> )
formative suffix; glide	<b>maḷuku</b> ( <i>aka.5:12</i> ) <b>iḷuki</b> ( <i>puṛa.281:3</i> ) <b>ciṛukiṭai</b> ( <i>pari.10:106</i> )
imperative/optative	<b>tīrka</b> ( <i>kuṛu.251:4</i> )
infinitive	<b>niṛka</b> ( <i>puṛa.126:13</i> )
negative forms	<b>nuḷaikallā</b> ( <i>puṛa.21:5</i> ) <b>ivarkallātu</b> ( <i>kuṛu.287:6</i> ) <b>aṛikallāy</b> ( <i>kali.95:26</i> ) <b>kaḷaikalam</b> ( <i>kuṛu.400:2</i> )
participle, adjectival	<b>kaṭkum</b> ( <i>kuṛu.100:2</i> )
personal verbs, non-past	<b>nukarku</b> ( <i>kuṛi:181</i> ) <b>cey kuvai</b> ( <i>pati.36:14</i> ) <b>amaikum</b> ( <i>aka.6:15</i> ) <b>kāṅkam</b> ( <i>narr.81:9</i> )

**kk(u):**

In addition to being a case marker, it signifies the non-past/non-completive aspect of the action of the verb stem to which it is attached. It also has a causative/effective significance. It occurs in the following contexts.

causative/effective	malarkkunar	( <i>pura.103:3</i> )
	ṭṛkka	( <i>pura.155:2</i> )
imperative/optative	ciṛakka	( <i>matu:194</i> )
infinitive	maṛakka	( <i>aink.470:5</i> )
negative forms	paṛakkallā	( <i>matu:231</i> )
	niṛukkallātu	( <i>aka.198:2</i> )
	uraikkallāṇ	( <i>kali.37:5</i> )
participle, adjectival	niṇaikkum	( <i>pura.217:1</i> )
personal verbs, non-past	kākkam	( <i>pura.281:7</i> )
	irukkuvēṇ	( <i>kali.142:32</i> )
	puḷikkum	( <i>kuru.354:2</i> )

**ñ:**

It never occurs as a suffix at the end of a word. It occurs in adjectival nouns and non-past participial nouns, and basically indicates the non-past/non-completive aspect of an action/state.

adjectival noun	valaiñar	( <i>peru:274</i> )
non-past participial noun	eṛiñar	( <i>aka.71:11</i> )

**t:**

It never occurs as a suffix at the end of a word, but appears in the following contexts. It seems to have a completive significance, but not in negative forms. It also has a non-causative/affective significance. Its original signification is not clear.

imperative/optative	pōṛṛuti	(kali.65:9)
infinitive	pukuta	(pari.22:11)
non-causative form	pukutum	(narr.171:5)
non-past stem	eṇṇutir	(aka.5:16)
negative form	ceyyāta	(kali.81:27)
past stem	peyt(u)	(peru.96)

**tt:**

It never occurs as a suffix at the end of a word, but appears in the following contexts. It seems to have a past/completive and/or causative/effective significance. It is the changed form of the word-final **m** in an oblique stem.

causative/transitive form	naṭatta	(pari.10:43)
	uyartta	(tiru.158)
imperative/optative	kātti	(pari.6:86)
oblique stem	ulakattu	(pura.174:20)
non-past personal verb	pulattiyāl	(aka.39:25)
past personal verb	viyarttanēn	(kuru.84:1)

**n:**

It never occurs as a suffix at the end of a word, but appears in adjectival nouns and non-past participial nouns. Basically, it indicates the non-past/non-completive aspect of an action/state.

adjectival noun	viṇainar	(pati.62:16)
non-past participial noun	piṛalna	(pati.13:1)
	malarkkunar	(pura.103:3)
	kuyinar	(matu.511)

**p:**

It never occurs as a suffix at the end of a word, but appears in the following contexts. It basically signifies the non-past/non-completive aspect of an action. It also has a non-causative/affective significance.

infinitive; non-causative form	nirpa	(aka.50:4)
non-past personal verb	kāṇpal	(pati.77:12)
non-past participial noun	koṭpaṇa	(kali.105:22)

**pp:**

It never occurs as a suffix at the end of a word, but appears in the following contexts. It basically signifies the non-past/non-completive aspect of an action. It also has a causative/effective significance.

causative form	uṇarppavaḷ	(kali.72:4)
	malarppōr	(pura.179:3)
	utirppa	(kuru.278:5)
infinitive	maṛappa	(pura.68:19)
non-past participial noun	iruppavar	(aka.389:10)
non-past personal verb	uraippal	(aka.28:2)

**m:**

In addition to occurring as a suffix at the end of a word, it is found in the following contexts. Its original significance is not clear.

glide	kuḷuma	(matu:677)
non-past form	uṇmar	(pati.24:18)

**y:**

It basically signifies the past/completive aspect of an action, and occurs in the following contexts.

adverbial participle	ulāy	(paṭṭ:233)
glide	kōyil	(neṭu:100)
past form	viṇāyiṇaṇ	(kali.68:16)

**v:**

It never occurs as a suffix at the end of a word, but appears in the following contexts. It basically signifies the non-past/non-completive aspect of an action. It has a non-causative/affective significance.

glide, affirmative verb	nōval	(aka.63:3)
glide, negative verb	nōvēṇ	(aka.63:3)
non-past participial noun; non-causative		
	utirva	(pari.2:44)
non-past personal verb	aṇivēṇ	(kuru.352:6)
	vāḷval	(pura.245:7)

## ANALYSIS OF A FEW POEMS

**GENERAL:** Rules of sentence construction in Tamil poetry are not always predictable. Classical Tamil poetry, in particular, provides a challenge in that its narrative nature thrives on creating several kinds of structural suspense. Sometimes the poem has to be read until the last word to find the theme of the poem or the subject of the main sentence, as will be seen in the last poem discussed below.

The basic idea of a classical Tamil poem can be obtained from the verbs and nouns in it. The minute details about each noun and each verb contribute to the development of the poem. These details are either explicit or are embedded in the items surrounding each noun and each verb.

One can ask the following elementary questions about a classical Tamil noun: Who/What is it?; What sort of a thing/person is it?; Where is the thing/person?; and/or what does it / the person do? The meaning/identification of the noun gives the answer to the first question: Who/What is it? Example: **maḷai** 'cloud(s)' in the first poem (*aiṅkurunūru* 423) discussed below. The modifier (**mā** 'dark') preceding the noun **maḷai** and forming a compound with it gives the answer to the second question, what sort of a thing/person is it: **mā maḷai** 'dark cloud(s).' The verbs associated with the

noun **maḷai** give the answer to the third question, what does it/the person do: **iṭiyūu** ‘while thundering’ and **corintanru** ‘it poured.’ Thus, **mā maḷai iṭiyūu ... corintanru ē** tells us that ‘Dark clouds, poured, (while) thundering.’

Similarly, one can ask several elementary questions about a classical Tamil verb: What is the action indicated?; Who did/will do the action?; What precedes the action?; and/or in what manner is/will the action be done and so on. A personal verb contains information about the doer of the action indicated by the verb stem, whereas the noun(s) associated with the personal verb give(s) the answer to who/what did the action or what/who experienced the action. A verbal participle associated with the personal verb provides information about what precedes or will follow the action and the manner in which the action is done and so on. Example: The verb **corintanru** ‘it poured’ in the first poem discussed below (*aiṅkurunūru* 423) tells us that the doer of the “task of pouring” is a third person neuter singular “it.” The noun **taḷi** ‘raindrops’ is the experiencer (i.e., the object) of the verb **corintanru** ‘it poured.’ The other noun associated with the personal verb **corintanru** is **maḷai** ‘cloud(s).’ The verbal participle **iṭiyūu** ‘while thundering’, an infinitive in this context, tells us that thunder precedes/occurs with the pouring of raindrops. Thus, the nominals (**mā**, **maḷai**, **taḷi**) and the verbals (**iṭiyūu**, **corintanru**) together present a picture of the rain: **mā maḷai iṭiyūu t taḷi corintanrē** ‘Dark clouds, thundering, poured raindrops.’ In the final analysis, it seems that a stack of nominal modifiers and verbal participles is sufficient to fabricate a large poem from two basic units, a noun and a verb.

Broadly speaking, a classical Tamil poem is made of several units of meaning where each unit contains at least one of the following grammatical items: (i) a **noun**, declined or undeclined (ii) a **noun** preceded by an adjective, (iii) a **noun** followed by a postposition or particle, (iv) an **adjectival participle** followed by a noun or postposition, (v) a **verbal participle**, (vi) a **finite verb** followed sometimes by a particle, and (vii) an **imperative**. The term “breakpoint” is useful to refer to these items.

A breakpoint marks the end of a nominal compound, noun phrase, postpositional phrase, or a verb clause. Furthermore, it bears a semantic relation to the word preceding it or following it or to the next breakpoint. Therefore, words which precede or follow a given breakpoint or participate in forming the nominal compound, noun phrase, postpositional phrase, or verb clause have to be taken together with the breakpoint for a meaningful interpretation.

If the breakpoint is a nominal (a noun, declined or undeclined, with or without a particle or postposition), then a link may exist either with the following word or the next break point. If the breakpoint is a verbal participle, it is linked, more often than not, to the next breakpoint rather than to the word immediately following it unless the latter is a breakpoint. A breakpoint which is an imperative may have a semantic relation with the preceding word, the following word, or the next breakpoint.

### ANALYSIS OF THREE POEMS

In the preceding pages, certain conclusive statements have been made about the order in which affixes are joined to stems, the manner in which modifiers like the adjectives and adverbs precede the modified, and how nominal and verbal participles are related to their head nouns and main verbs. Three classical Tamil poems (*aiṅkurunūru* 423, *puṛaṇānūru* 278, and *akaṇānūru* 9) are analyzed now to illustrate how the various items in a poem are interconnected.



*aiṅkuṛunūru 423*

The poem as it would appear in a printed text:

māmaḷai yiṭiyūut taḷicorin taṇṇē      மாமழை யிடியூஉத் தளிசொரிந் தன்றே  
vāṇutal pacappac celavayarn taṇaiyē      வாணுதல் பசப்பச் செலவயர்ந் தனையே  
yāmē niṇṇuraṇ tamaiyalam      யாமே நிறுறந் தமையலம்  
āymala ruṇkaṇu nīrnirain taṇavē      ஆய்மல ருண்கணு நீர்நிறைந் தனவே

Applying morphophonemic rules, the individually meaningful items can be separated as follows:

mā maḷai y iṭiyūu t taḷi corintaṇṇ(u) ē      மா மழை இடியூஉத் தளி சொரிந்தன்று-ஏ  
vāḷ nutal pacappa c celav(u) ayaṁtaṇṇai ē      வாள் நுதல் பசப்பச் செலவு அயர்ந்தனை-ஏ  
yām ē niṇṇu tuṇant(u) ama iyalam      யாம்-ஏ நின்-துறந்து அமையலம்  
āy malar uṇkaṇ um nīr niraṇtaṇa v ē      ஆய்மலர் உண்கண்-உம் நீர் நிறைந்தன-ஏ

Here, the various items in the poem are identified with their meanings:

item	meaning	grammatical identification
mā	dark/black	adjective
maḷai	cloud(s)	noun
iṭiyūu	thundering	infinitive < iṭi 'to thunder'
taḷi	raindrop(s)	noun

corintaṇṇu	it poured	personal verb 3rd person neuter singular < cori 'to pour'
ē	[theme separator] [gives a sense of pity, anxiety]	particle
vāl	bright	adjective
nutaḷ	forehead	noun
pacappa	becoming pale	infinitive < paca 'to turn pale'
celavu	journey	verbal noun < cel 'to leave'
ayaṛntaṇṇai	you have undertaken	personal verb, 2nd person singular < ayaṛ 'to engage in, undertake'
ē	[theme separator] [gives a sense of anxiety, lamentation, reluctance]	particle
yām	we	pronoun; 1st person exc.pl.
ē	[theme separator]	particle
niṇ	you	oblique of 1st person singular pronoun nī 'you'
tuṛantu	having renounced; renouncing	adverbial participle < tuṛa 'to renounce, depart from'
amaiaḷam	we will not be calm	negative personal verb 1st person exc.pl. < amai 'to be calm, be at rest'
āy	wilt, droop, fade, select	verb stem
malar	flower(s)	noun
uṇ	eat, devour, enjoy	verb stem
kaṇ	eye(s)	noun
um	and, also, too	particle
nīṛ	water, tears	noun
niṛaintaṇa	they are filled with	personal verb, 3rd person neuter plural < niṛai 'to fill'

ē [theme separator,  
marks the end of a poem] particle

The whole poem is paraphrased first without bringing in any knowledge of the literary conventions:

mā maḷai iṭiyūu taḷi corintaṇṇu ē  
*The dark cloud poured raindrops while thundering, indeed*  
vāḷ nutal pacappa celavu ayaṛntaṇai ē  
*But you have undertaken a journey while the bright forehead*  
*has turned pale*  
yām ē niṇ tuṛantu amaiyalam  
*We, on the other hand, cannot be calm, renouncing you*  
āy malar uṇ kaṇ um nīṛ niraṇtaṇa ē  
*Also the seductive eyes, which resemble fading/selected flow-*  
*ers, are filled with tears<sup>1</sup>*

With a conventional understanding of the phrases in the poem, we can have the following interpretation:

*The thundering dark cloud has poured raindrops, indeed<sup>2</sup>*  
*But you have undertaken a journey as (your lover's) bright forehead*  
*has turned pale (due to the anxiety of separation)*

---

<sup>1</sup> The phrase āy malar uṇ kaṇ is ambiguous yielding more than one interpretation: 'eyes like fading flowers/selected flowers.' The interpretation of āy malar 'fading flowers' vs. 'selected flowers' depends on how one perceives the expression in the eyes of a woman whose lover, the hero, is about to depart on a journey without her.

<sup>2</sup> This line refers to the rainy season which is the time when the hero normally returns home to his lover/wife from various assignments such as seeking wealth or helping the king in war.

*Whereas, we (your lover and I, her female friend) cannot be calm  
separated from you  
The seductive eyes (of your lover), which (now) resemble fading  
flowers, are filled with tears*

A more elegant translation:<sup>3</sup>

*Dark clouds  
Thundering  
Let loose their rain:  
her bright forehead has gone pale  
now that you're to go away.*

*Still, we haven't deserted you.  
No peace for us  
any more —*

*deadly eyes  
fading like flowers  
are flooded with tears.*

Each line in this poem is a complete sentence, each of which has its main verb at the end of the line. Each sentence, except the last, contains a subordinate clause marked by a verbal participle (a breakpoint). The sentences are broken down into significantly meaningful units:

---

<sup>3</sup> This translation was provided by David D. Shulman.

Line 1:     **mā maḷai iṭiyūu t taḷi corintaṇṇ(u) ē**

Meaningful units:

- 1.1.   **mā maḷai iṭiyūu** ‘dark cloud(s) thundering’
- 1.2.   **taḷi corintaṇṇu ē** ‘it poured raindrops’

Line 2:     **vāḷ nutal pacappa c celav(u) ayaṇṭaṇai ē**

Meaningful units:

- 2.1.   **vāḷ nutal pacappa**  
          ‘while the bright forehead has turned pale’
- 2.2.   **celavu ayaṇṭaṇai ē**  
          ‘you have undertaken a journey’

Line 3:     **yām ē niṇ tuṇantu amaiyalam**

Meaningful units:

- 3.1.   **yām ē** ‘we, on the other hand’
- 3.2.   **niṇ tuṇantu amaiyalam**  
          ‘we will not be calm, renouncing you’

Line 4:     **āy malar uṇkaṇ um nīṇ nīṇaintaṇa ē**

Meaningful units:

- 4.1.   **āy malar uṇkaṇ um**  
          ‘also the seductive eyes like fading flowers’
- 4.2.   **nīṇ nīṇaintaṇa ē** ‘are filled with tears’

The first meaningful unit in Line 1 is **mā maḷai iṭiyūu**. The adjective **mā** ‘dark’ and the noun **maḷai** ‘cloud(s)’ constitute the nominal compound **mā maḷai** ‘dark cloud(s)’:

**mā   maḷai**

└────────┘

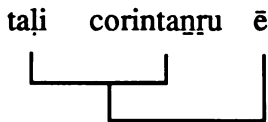
['dark cloud(s)']

The head noun **maḷai** 'cloud(s)' in this compound functions as the subject of the infinitive **iṭiyūu** 'while thundering.' The sequence **mā maḷai iṭiyūu** 'dark cloud(s), while thundering' has an incomplete sense:



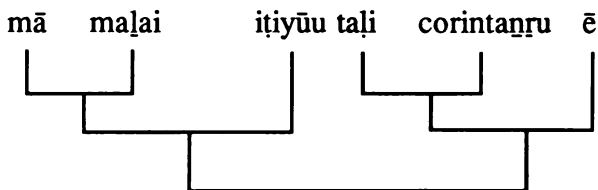
['dark cloud(s), while thundering']

This infinitive clause has its sense completed when taken together with the next unit **taḷi corintanru ē**, which has the following structure:



['It poured raindrops.']

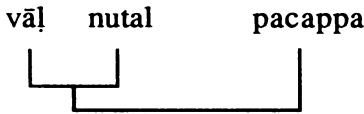
The word **taḷi** 'raindrop(s)' is the object of **maḷai** 'cloud(s)' in the preceding unit. Taken together, **mā maḷai iṭiyūu taḷi corintanru ē** can be understood as 'Alas, the dark cloud(s) poured raindrops, while thundering.'



['The dark cloud poured raindrops while thundering.']<sup>4</sup>

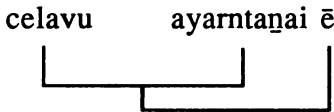
<sup>4</sup> In fact, the word **maḷai** means 'cloud' or 'clouds.' Here, the choice of the singular meaning is determined by the finite verb **corintanru** which is singular.

Line 2, **vāḷ nutal pacappa celavu ayaṛntānai ē**, contains the subordinate clause **vāḷ nutal pacappa** 'as/whereas the bright forehead has turned pale' and the main sentence **celavu ayaṛntānai ē** 'you have undertaken a journey.' The three items in the subordinate clause (**vāḷ nutal pacappa**) are connected in the following way. The adjective **vāḷ** 'bright' and the noun **nutaḷ** 'forehead' form the compound **vāḷ nutaḷ** 'bright forehead', which in turn, functions as the subject of the infinitive **pacappa** 'as it turned pale.'



[ 'as the bright forehead has turned pale' ]<sup>5</sup>

The next meaningful unit **celavu ayaṛntānai ē** 'But you have undertaken a journey' is a complete sentence.

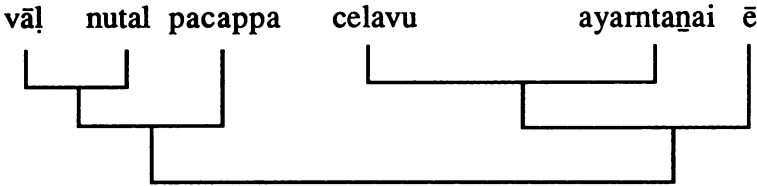


[ 'But you have undertaken a journey.' ]

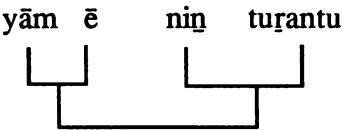
However, this unit is modified by the preceding clause **vāḷ nutal pacappa**.

---

<sup>5</sup> Some might interpret **vāḷ nutaḷ** as metonymically referring to the heroine whose forehead is talked about in this context.



Line 3, **yām ē nin̄ tuṛantu amaiyalam**, contains a subordinate clause **yāmē nin̄ tuṛantu** ‘we, on the other hand, renouncing you’ and the main verb **amaiyalam** ‘we will not be calm.’<sup>6</sup> The pronoun **yām** is the subject of the adverbial participle **tuṛantu** and the main verb **amaiyalam**. The oblique form **nin̄** is the object of the adverbial participle **tuṛantu**. The items in the adverbial participle clause **yāmē nin̄ tuṛantu** can be connected as follows:



[‘We, on the other hand, renouncing you ...’]<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> It is possible to interpret **nin̄ tuṛantu** as ‘being separated from you.’ The reason for interpreting the phrase literally to mean ‘renouncing you’ is as follows: (a) grammatically, **nin̄** serves as the object of **tuṛantu** rather than holding an ablative case relation (‘from’) with **tuṛantu** or anything else; (b) the time spoken of is the rainy season when the hero normally returns to her lover, but if the hero were to undertake a journey in the rainy season without his lover, it would only mean that he has the inner strength to do so. Thus, the speaker in the poem (the female friend of the heroine) seems to chide the hero, implying that whereas it might be possible for the hero to renounce his lover, it is not possible for his lover (and her female companion who has to comfort her) to renounce him.

<sup>7</sup> The particle **ē** is interpreted to give the sense ‘whereas, on the other hand.’

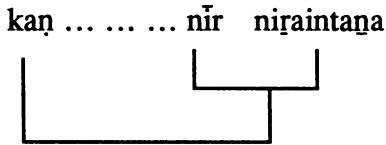






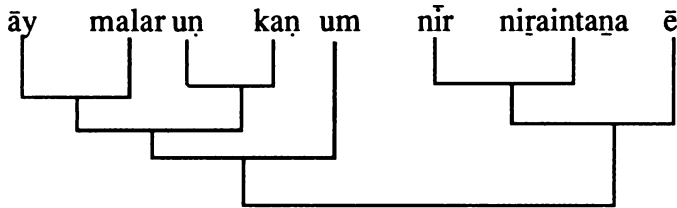
['seductive eyes (now) like fading flowers']

The particle **um** which is appended to **kaṇ** 'eyes' provides the sense 'and, also, too, moreover.' Therefore, the phrase **āy malar uṇ kaṇum** 'moreover, the seductive eyes like fading flowers' has an incomplete sense. The next part **nīr nīraintaṇavē** 'They are filled with tears' in this line brings a complete sense to the whole line. The subject of the finite verb **nīraintaṇa** is **kaṇ** and the object is **nīr**.



['The eyes are filled with tears.']

**āy malar uṇ kaṇum nīr nīraintaṇa** means 'Also the seductive eyes, now like fading flowers, are filled with tears.' The particle **ē** appended to **nīraintaṇa** marks the end of the poem and considering the tone of the whole poem, can be taken to provide a sense of reluctance and sympathy. In fact, the particle **ē** at the end of lines 1, 3, and 4 provides a mixed sense of anxiety, pity, reluctance, and sympathy.



[Moreover, the seductive eyes, now like fading flowers, are filled with tears.]

The basic idea of the poem is this: ‘The cloud has poured raindrops. You have undertaken a journey. We will not be calm when separated from you. Your lover’s eyes are filled with tears.’ The following items are sufficient to convey the basic idea: **maḷai** ‘cloud(s)’, **cori** ‘to pour’, **celavu** ‘journey’, **ayarntanai** ‘you have undertaken’, **amaiyalam** ‘we will not be calm’, **kaṇ** ‘eye(s)’, **nīr** ‘tears’, and **nīraintaṇa** ‘are filled.’ However, they do not make up a poem; they are just a list of core words.

The development of core words into a poem is achieved through craftsmanship. Understanding the meaning of the words depends upon a good grasp of the grammar. An appreciation of the poem is achieved through knowledge of the poetic conventions.<sup>10</sup>

### *puṛaṇāṇūru* 278

A poem which is slightly larger and more complex in syntax than *aiṅkuṛunūru* 423 is discussed next. This poem, *puṛaṇāṇūru* 278, is about a heroic mother. The mother is disturbed by the rumour that her son faced defeat and retreated from the battle. Ashamed of her son’s alleged defeat,

<sup>10</sup> See “Theory of Classical Tamil Poetry” in this study and Ramanujan’s *Poems of Love and War* (1985:231-297) for discussions of classical Tamil poetic conventions.

the heroic mother takes an oath to tear off her breasts which nursed the (coward) son when he was a baby, if indeed he fled from the battle. With a sword in her hand, she proceeds to the battlefield, looks for her son, and finds out that he is among the fallen heroes. At that, she is ecstatic; her joy surpasses the joy she experienced long ago when she gave birth to him. The poem is given below after morphophonemic rules are applied:

narampu eḷuntu ulaṛiya nirampā meṇ tōḷ

நரம்பு எழுந்து உலறிய நிரம்பா மென் தோள்

muḷari maruṅkiṇ mutiyōḷ ciṛuvaṇ

முளரி மருங்கின் முதியோள் சிறுவன்

paṭai aḷintu māṛiṇaṇ eṇṛu palar kūṛa

படை அழிந்து மாறினன் என்று பலர் கூற

maṇṭu amarkku uṭaintaṇaṇ āyiṇ uṇṭa eṇ

மண்டு அமர்க்கு உடைந்தனன் ஆயின் உண்ட என்

mulai aruttu iṭuveṇ yāṇ eṇa ciṇaii

முலை அறுத்து இடுவென் யான் என சினைஇ

koṇṭa vāḷoṭu paṭu piṇam peyarā

கொண்ட வாளொடு படு பிணம் பெயரா

cem kaḷam tuḷavuvōḷ citaintu vēṛu ākiya

செம் களம் துழவுவோள் சிதைந்து வேறு ஆகிய

paṭu makaṇ kiṭakkai kāṇū

படு மகன் கிடக்கை காணூஉ

īṇṛa ṇāṇṛiṇum peritu uvantaṇaḷ ē

ஈன்ற ஞானறினும் பெரிது உவந்தனளே

The poem can be rearranged according to its individually meaningful units:

narampu eḷuntu ulaṛiya nirampā meṇ tōḷ

நரம்பு எழுந்து உலறிய நிரம்பா மென் தோள்

muḷari maruṅkiṇ mutiyōḷ

முளரி மருங்கின் முதியோள்

ciṟuvaṇ paṭai alintu māṟiṇaṇ enru palar kūṟa

சிறுவன் படை அழிந்து மாறினன் என்று பலர் கூற

maṇṭu amarkku uṭaintaṇaṇ āyiṇ

மண்டு அமார்க்கு உடைந்தனன் ஆயின்

uṇṭa eṇ mulai aruttu iṭuveṇ yāṇ eṇa ciṇaii

உண்ட என் முலை அறுத்து இடுவென் யான் என சினைஇ

koṇṭa vāḷoṭu paṭu piṇam peyarā cem kaḷam tuḷavuvōḷ

கொண்ட வாளொடு படு பிணம் பெயரா செம் களம் துழவுவோள்

citaintu vēṟu ākiya paṭu makaṇ kiṭakkai kāṇūu

சிதைந்து வேறு ஆகிய படு மகன் கிடக்கை காணூஉ

īṇra nāṇṟiṇum peritu uvantaṇaḷ ē

ஈன்ற ஞான்றினும் பெரிது உவந்தனளே

The various items with their meanings and grammatical identifications:

item	meaning	grammatical identification
narampu	nerves, veins	noun
eḷuntu	rising	adverbial participle < elu 'to rise, swell'
ulaṟiya	dried, without luster	adjectival participle < ulaṟu 'to dry up, lose luster'
nirampā	not filled, empty	adjectival participle, negative < nirampu 'to be full'
meṇ	soft, tender	adjective
tōḷ	shoulder(s)	noun

muḷari	thorny, bony	noun
maruṅku	waist	noun
iṇ	of, with	case marker, genitive
mutiyōl	old woman	adjectival noun 3rd person feminine singular < mutu 'old'
ciṛuvaṇ	small boy, son	noun
paṭai	weapon, arms	noun
aḷintu	having perished	adverbial participle < aḷi 'to perish'
māriṇaṇ	he moved away	personal verb, past 3rd person masculine singular < māru 'to move away, retreat'
enru	thus, that	quotative, adverbial participle < en 'to say'
palar	many people	adjectival noun 3rd person human plural < pal 'many'
kūra	as (they) stated	infinitive < kūru 'to state, declare'
maṇṭu	rushing	verb stem; here, adjectival participle
amarkku	in response to the army	dative case amar 'war, warriors'
uṭaintaṇaṇ	he broke down	kku, case marker personal verb, past 3rd person masculine singular < uṭai 'to break down'
āyiṇ	if it is	conditional < ā 'to be'
uṇṭa	sucked	adjectival participle
eṇ	my	oblique of yāṇ 'I'
mulai	breasts	noun
aṛuttu	having severed	adverbial participle < aṛu 'to sever, cut off'

iṭuven	I will throw down; drop	personal verb, 1st person singular < iṭu 'to drop'
yān	I	pronoun, 1st person singular
eṇa	thus, that	quotative; infinitive of eṇ 'to think'
ciṇaii	getting angry	adverbial participle < ciṇa 'to get angry'
koṇṭa	(that which was) taken	adjectival participle < koḷ 'to have, take hold'
vāḷoṭu	with the sword	instrumental case vāḷ 'sword'; oṭu, case marker
paṭu	lying, dying, falling	verb stem paṭu 'to die, lie down'
piṇam	corpse	noun
peyarā	removing	infinitive < peyar 'to remove'
cem	red	adjective
kaḷam	field	noun
tuḷavuvōḷ	she who stirs up	participial noun, non-past 3rd person feminine singular < tuḷavu 'to stir up'
citaintu	having been deformed	adverbial participle < citai 'to be deformed'
vēru	different	noun
ākiya	that which/who became	X adjectival participle < āku 'to become'
paṭu	lying, falling	verb stem paṭu 'to lie down; fall; die'
makaṇ	son	noun
kiṭakkai	lying state	verbal noun < kiṭa 'to lie still'
kāṇūu	seeing, viewing	infinitive < kāṇ 'to see, view'
īṇra	when X gave birth	adjectival participle < īṇ 'to give birth'

ñāṇṛiṇum	more than when	comparison ñāṇru 'time, moment' iṇum comparative marker
peritu	bigger, more	adjectival noun < per(u) 'big'
uvantaṇaḷ	she rejoiced	personal verb, past 3rd person feminine singular < uva 'to rejoice'
ē	indeed	particle

The lines in the poem are translated below according to their individually meaningful units:

narampu eḷuntu ulaṛiya niraṃpā meṇ tōḷ muḷari maruṇkiṇ mutiyōḷ  
*The old woman with emaciated waist and soft, dry, lean  
shoulders with visible veins*

ciṛuvaṇ paṭai aḷintu māṛiṇaṇ eṇṛu palar kūṛa  
*as many people stated that the boy retreated, his weapons  
destroyed*

maṇṭu amarkku uṭaintaṇaṇ āyiṇ  
*"if he broke down in response to the rushing army"*

uṇṭa eṇ mulai aṛuttu iṭuveṇ eṇa ciṇaii  
*getting angry thinking, "I shall cut off and throw down my  
breasts which he sucked"*

koṇṭa vāḷoṭu paṭu piṇam peyarā cem kaḷam tuḷavuvōḷ  
*she, who stirs up the red field,  
moving the corpses with a sword*

citaintu vēṛu ākiya paṭu makaṇ kiṭakkai kāṇūu  
*seeing the lying state of her dying son, deformed and different*

īṇṛa ñāṇṛiṇum peritu uvantaṇaḷ ē  
*(she) rejoiced more than she did  
when she gave birth to him*



Four major breakpoints can be identified in this poem: **mutiyōl** ‘old woman’, **cinaii** ‘getting angry’, **kāṇūu** ‘seeing’, and **uvantanaḷ** ‘she rejoiced.’ They hold semantic connections with the rest of the nouns, case markers, adjectives, and participles in the poem. The poem has developed around the details about these basic items, providing answers to questions such as ‘What sort of an old woman?’, ‘Getting angry for what?’, ‘Seeing what?’, and ‘Why and how did she rejoice?’

The first **breakpoint** and the smaller units associated with it:

1. **narampu eḷuntu ulaṛiya** (adjectival participle clause)  
     **nirampā meṇ tōl** (noun phrase)  
         [‘soft, dry, lean shoulders with visible veins’]
2. **muḷari maruṅku** (compound)  
         [‘emaciated waist’]  
     **iṇ** (case marker) [‘with’]  
     **mutiyōl** (noun) [‘old woman’]

The second **breakpoint** and the smaller units associated with it:

3. **ciṛuvaṇ paṭai aḷintu maṛiṇaṇ eṇṇu palar kūṛa** (infinitive clause)  
         [‘as many people stated that the boy moved  
         away, his weapons destroyed’]
4. **maṇṭu amarkku uṭaintaṇaṇ āyiṇ** (conditional clause)  
         [‘if he broke down in response to the rushing  
         army’]
5. **uṇṭa eṇ mulai aṛuttu iṭuveṇ eṇa cinaii** (adverbial participle clause)  
         [‘getting angry thinking  
         “I shall cut off and throw down  
         my breasts which he sucked” ’]

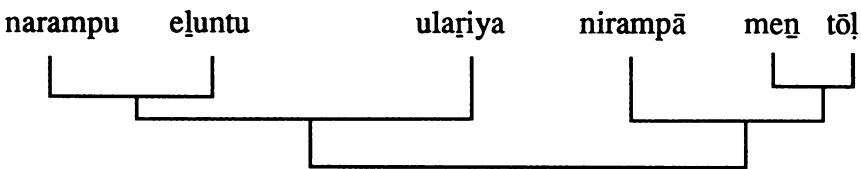
The third **breakpoint** and the smaller units associated with it:

6. **koṇṭa vāloṭu paṭu piṇam peyarā cem kaḷam tuḷavuvōḷ**  
 (participial noun phrase)  
 ['she, who stirs up the red field, moving the  
 corpses with a sword']
7. **citaintu vēru ākiya paṭu maṇṇ kiṭakkai kāṇūu** (infinitive clause)  
 ['seeing the lying state of her dying son,  
 deformed and different']

The fourth **breakpoint** and the smaller unit associated with it:

8. **īṇra nīṇṇiṇum** (comparison) ['more than the day she gave birth']  
**peritu** (adverbial) ['much']  
**uvantaṇaḷ** (personal verb)  
 ['she rejoiced']  
**ē** (particle) [marks the end of the poem;  
 sense of relief, appreciation]

The description of the old woman is couched in the larger phrase **narampu eḷuntu ulaṛiya nirampā men tōḷ muḷari maruṅku**, which in turn includes the first two units **narampu eḷuntu ulaṛiya nirampā men tōḷ** 'soft, dry, lean shoulders in which veins are swelling' and **muḷari maruṅku** 'bony/emaciated waist.'



['soft, dry, lean shoulders wherein the veins are swelling']

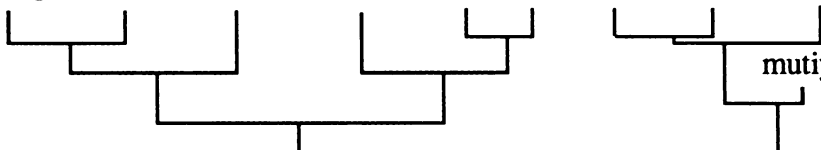
muḷari                      maruṅku



[‘thorny/bony waist’]

The genitive case marker **in** connects the phrase **narampu eḷuntu ulaṛiya nirampā meṇ tōḷ muḷari maruṅku** with the next item **mutiyōḷ**, which is a breakpoint.

narampu eḷuntu ulaṛiya nirampā meṇ tōḷ muḷari maruṅku **in**

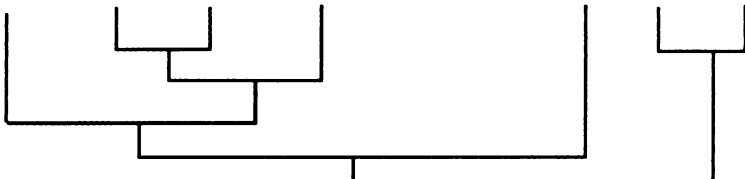


mutiyōḷ

[‘the old woman **with** emaciated waist and soft, dry, lean shoulders showing the veins’]

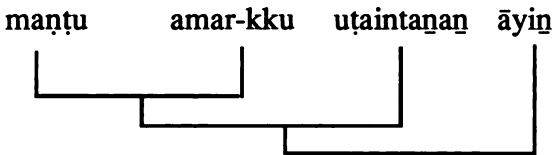
The third unit is an infinitive clause embedding a finite sentence: **ciruvan paṭai aḷintu māṛiṇaṇ enru palar kūṛa** ‘as many people stated “The boy moved away, his weapons destroyed.” ’

ciruvan    paṭai    aḷintu    māṛiṇaṇ                      enru    palar    kūṛa

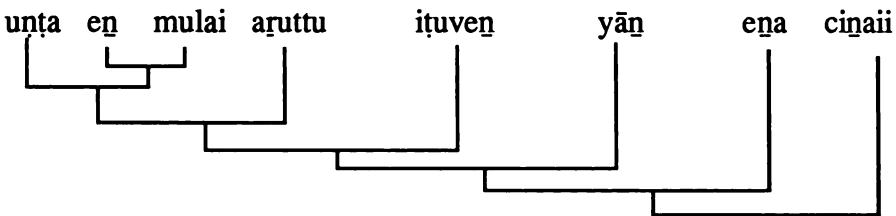


[‘as many people stated: “The boy moved away, his weapons destroyed” ’]

The fourth meaningful unit is a conditional clause: **maṇṭu amar-kku uṭaintaṇaṇ āyiṇ** ‘if he broke down in response to the rushing army’



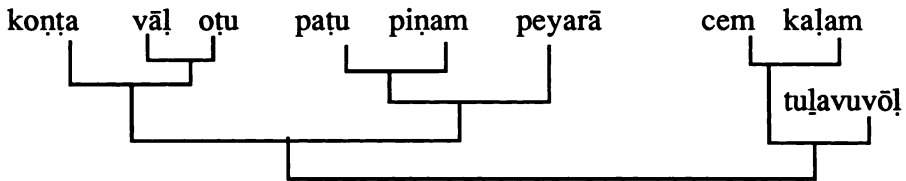
The fifth meaningful unit is an adverbial participle clause embedding a finite sentence: **uṇṭa eṇ mulai aruttu iṭuven yān eṇa ciṇaii** ‘getting angry thinking “I shall cut off and throw down my breasts which he sucked.” ’



[‘getting angry thinking “I shall cut off and throw down my breasts which he sucked” ’]

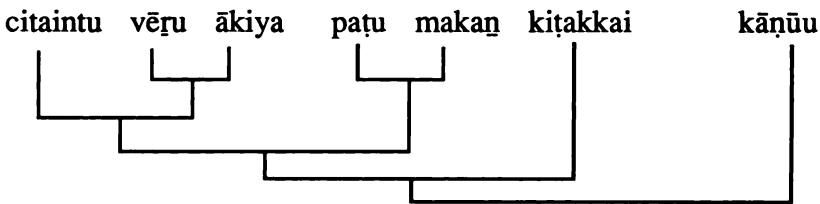
The subject of **uṇṭa** is the same as the subject of **uṭaintaṇaṇ**, which is **ciṇavan** ‘the boy.’

The sixth meaningful unit ends with a participial noun embedding an infinitive clause: **koṇṭa vāloṭu paṭu piṇam peyarā cem kaḷam tuḷavuvōḷ** ‘she who stirs up the red field removing the corpses, which were lying around, with the sword she took’



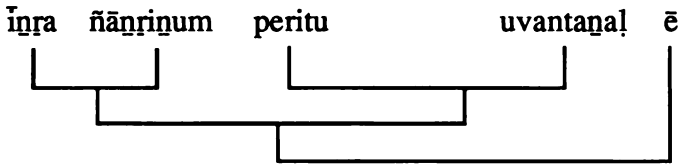
[‘she who stirs up the red field moving the corpses lying around with the sword she took’]

The seventh meaningful unit is an infinitive clause: **citaintu vēru ākiya paṭu maṇṇ kiṭakkai kāṇūu** ‘looking at the state of her lying son, deformed and different.’ This clause contains a large noun phrase **citaintu vēru ākiya paṭu maṇṇ kiṭakkai** ‘the lying state of the son who is deformed and has become different (dead).’ The head noun **kiṭakkai** in this phrase is the object of the participle **kāṇūu**.



[‘looking at the state of her lying son, deformed and different’]

The last meaningful unit is a finite sentence: **īṇra ṇāṇriṇum peritu uvantaṇaḷē** ‘She rejoiced, indeed, more than when she gave birth to him.’



[‘She rejoiced, indeed, more than when she gave birth to him.’]

The paraphrase:

*When many people said that the boy with his destroyed weapons  
retreated (from the battlefield)*

*The old woman with emaciated waist and tender lifeless lean shoulders  
showing the veins*

*Got angry and thinking,*

*“I shall tear away my breasts which he sucked, if he  
(in fact) broke down in response to the rushing army”*

*With her sword, moved the corpses, and while stirring up the red  
(battle)field*

*Looking at the lying state of her dead son, deformed and different  
Rejoiced more than she did when she gave birth to him.*

An aesthetic translation<sup>11</sup>:

*The old woman's shoulders  
were dry, unfleshed,  
with outstanding veins;  
her low belly  
was like a lotus pad.*

<sup>11</sup> This translation is by A.K. Ramanujan.

*When people said  
her son had taken fright,  
had turned his back on battle  
and died,*

*she raged  
and shouted,  
    "if he really broke down  
    in the thick of battle,  
    I'll slash these breasts  
    that gave him suck,"  
and went there,  
sword in hand.*

*Turning over body after fallen body,  
she rummaged through the blood-red field  
till she found her son,  
quartered, in pieces,*

*and she rejoiced  
more than on the day  
she gave him birth.*

*akanānūru 9*

The last poem taken here for analysis is a narration by a dramatic persona, the hero. The hero is returning to his woman after finishing the task he had undertaken. He is rushing through the forest hastening the fast horses of his chariot. But his heart, faster than himself, desiring the soft shoulders of his woman has already left him. He wonders whether the

heart reached his woman who is waiting for him and has already found its joy as she caressed it. These thoughts formulate the hero's narration.

The poem is full of suspense and is very complex in structure. It is composed of just one sentence, the subject of which appears only as the very last word. Numerous nominal phrases and verb clauses are embedded in this sentence, and each of these phrases and clauses contains several smaller phrases and clauses. It is the stack of phrases that makes the poem structurally complex. The poem (*akanānūru* 9) as it appears in printed texts:

kolvinaiṇ polinta kūṛikuṇum pulukin

கொல்வினைப் பொலிந்த கூர்ங்குறும் புழுகின்

villōr tūṇi vīṅkap peyta

வில்லோர் தூணி வீங்கப் பெய்த

appunūnai ēyppa arumpiya iruppaic

அப்புநனை ஏய்ப்ப அரும்பிய இருப்பைச்

ceppaṭar aṇṇa cenkuḷai akantō

செப்படர் அன்ன செங்குழை அகந்தோ

ṛilutin aṇṇa tīmpuḷal tuyvāy

றிழுதின் அன்ன தீம்புழல் துய்வாய்

uḷutukāṇ tuḷaiya vāki āṛkaḷal

உழுதுகாண் துளைய வாகி ஆர்கழல்

pāli vāṇiṇ kāloṭu pārit

பாலி வானிற் காலொடு பாறித்

tuppin aṇṇa cenkōṭṭ iyavin

துப்பின் அன்ன செங்கோட் டியவின்

neyttōr mīmīcai niṇattir parikkum

நெய்த்தோர் மீமிசை நிணத்திற் பரிக்கும்

atta naṇṇiya aṅkuṭic cīṇurk

அத்த நண்ணிய அங்குடிச் சீறர்க்



koṭununḥ ṭi makalir ṭkkiya

கொடுநுண் ஓதி மகளிர் ஓக்கிய

toṭimāṇ ulakkait tūṇṭuraṇ pāṇi

தொடிமாண் உலக்கைத் தூண்டூற் பாணி

neṭumāl varaiya kuṭiṇaiyō ṭiraṭṭunḥ

நெடுமால் வரைய குடிகையோ டிரட்டுங்

kunṇrupiṇ oḷiyap pōki uranturantu

குன்றுபின் ஒழியப் போகி உரந்துரந்து

ṇāyiṇu paṭiṇum ūrcēytt eṇṭu

ஞாயிறு படினும் ஊர்சேய்த் தெனது

tunai pari turakkum tuṇicāc celaviṇ

துணைபரி துரக்கும் துஞ்சாச் செலவின்

emmiṇum viraintuval leytip paṇmāṇ

எம்மினும் விரைந்துவல் லெய்திப் பன்மாண்

ōṇkiya nallil oruciṇai nilaiip

ஓங்கிய நல்லில் ஒருசிறை நிலைஇப்

pāṇkarp palli paṭutorum paravik

பாங்கர்ப் பல்லி படுதொறும் பரவிக்

kaṇṇrupuku mālai niṇṇōḷ eytik

கன்றுபுகு மாலை நின்றோள் எய்திக்

kaikaviyāc cenru kaṇputaiyāk kuṇṇkip

கைகவியாச் சென்று கண்புதையாக் குறுகிப்

piṭikkai aṇṇa piṇṇakam ṭiṇṭit

பிடிக்கை அன்ன பின்னகம் தீண்டித்

toṭikkai taivarat tōyntaṇru kollō

தொடிக்கை தைவரத் தோய்ந்தன்று கொல்லோ

nāṇoṭu miṭainta karpin vāṇutal

நானொடு மிடைந்த கற்பின் வாணுதல்

antīṇ kiḷavik kuṇmakal

அந்தீங் கிளவிக் குறுமகள்

menrōl perānacaic cenrāven neñcē

மென்றோள் பெறநகைஇச் சென்றவென் நெஞ்சே

The paraphrase:

**I wonder whether**  
**my heart which left me**  
**desiring the soft shoulders**  
 of the young woman with bright forehead,  
 sweet words, and bashfulness blended with profundity  
**leaving the hills (behind)**  
 where the rhythmic beat  
 from the mortar pounded with ornamental pestles  
 raised by women with thin curly hair  
 alternates with the owls  
 in the tall dark mountain  
 in the small town with nice residences  
 that is close to the forest  
 where in the elevated path, red like coral  
 the soft ends of the stamens, sweet as butter  
 scratched all inside the red copper-like shoots  
 of the *iruppai* (tree)  
 which has put out buds resembling the tips  
 of shining arrows that are tightly  
 packed  
 in the quivers by bowmen for the  
 task of killing  
 developed holes that one can see, and  
 loosening from their calyx

are scattered by the wind resembling a sky with  
 hail  
**urged by strength, and**  
**without thinking** that the (woman's) town is far away  
**moving faster** than me who hasten the rushing horses  
**reaching quickly, and**  
**staying on one side** of the tall good house, perfect in many aspects  
**reaching her** who, in the evening when calves return home,  
 is waiting and praying everytime the lizard in the vicinity calls  
 going with cupped fingers  
**getting close** and covering (her) eyes  
**touching (her) back** ( which is soft) like the trunk of a female  
 elephant  
**immersed** (in her) as (her) hands wearing bracelets caressed (it)?

One can think of this poem as consisting of the following 20 or so meaningful units. The breakpoints are given in bold type.

1. kol viṇai p polinta kūṛṇ kuṛum puḷukiṇ villōṛ tūṇi vīṅka p peyta  
 appu nuṇai  
     ēyppa arumpiya **iruppai** c  
     ceppu aṭar aṇṇa ceṅkuḷai **akam tōṛu**  
     iḷutiṇ aṇṇa tīm puḷal tuy vāy uḷutu  
 ['The **soft ends of the stamens**, sweet as butter, **scratched**  
 all **inside** the red copper-like **shoots** of the *iruppai* (tree)  
 which has put out buds resembling the tips of shining arrows  
 that are tightly packed in the quivers by bowmen for the task  
 of killing, and ...']
2. kāṇ tuḷaiya āki ['**developed holes** that one can see, and ...']
3. āṛ kaḷalpu ['**loosening** from their calyx, and ...']

4. āli vānil kāloṭu pāri  
[‘are scattered by the wind resembling a sky with hail, and ...’]
5. tuppīṇ aṇṇa ceṇkōṭṭu iyaviṇ  
[‘in the elevated path, red like coral’]
6. neyttōr mīmīcai niṇattīr parikkum  
[‘spread like fat over thick blood’]  
attam [‘the forest (where)’]  
naṇṇiya am kuṭi c cīrur k  
[‘in the small nearby town with nice residences’]
7. koṭu nuṇ ṭi makalīr ṭkkiya toṭi māṇ ulakkai t tūṇṭu ural pāṇi  
[‘the rhythmic beat from the mortar(s) pounded with ornamental pestles raised by women with thin curly hair’]
8. neṭu māl varaiya kuṭiṇaiyōṭu irattum kunru  
[‘hills where it (the rhythmic beat of the pestles) alternates with the owls in the tall dark mountain’]
9. piṇ oḷiya p pōki [‘leaving (the hills) behind’]
10. uram turantu [‘urged by strength’]
11. ṇāyiṇu paṭiṇum ūr cēyttu enātu  
[‘and without thinking that the (woman’s) town is far away’]
12. tuṇai pari turakkum tuṇcā c celaviṇ emmiṇum viraintu  
[‘and moving faster than us/me who hasten the rushing horses’]
13. val eyti [‘reaching quickly’]
14. paṇ māṇ ṭṇkiya nal il oru ciṇai nilaii  
[‘staying on one side of the tall good house, perfect in many aspects’]
15. pāṇkar p palli paṭu toṇum paravi k kaṇru puku mālai niṇrōḷ eyti  
[‘reaching her who, in the evening when calves return home,

is waiting and praying everytime the lizard in the vicinity calls']

16. kai kaviyā c **cenru** ['going with cupped fingers']

17. kaṇ putaiyā k **kuṛuki** ['getting close and covering (her) eyes']

18. piṭi k kai aṇṇa piṇ akam **tīṇṭi**

['touching (her) inner back (which is soft) like the trunk of a female elephant']

19. toṭi k kai taivara t **tōyntanru** kollō

['(I) wonder whether it immersed (in her) as (her) hands wearing bracelets caressed (it)']

20. nāṇoṭu miṭainta karpin vāḷ nutal am tīṇ kiḷavi k kuṛu makal **men**  
**tōḷ** peṛa **nacaii** c **ceṇra** eṇ **neñcē**

['my heart which left me desiring the soft shoulders of the young woman with bright forehead, sweet words, and bashfulness blended with profundity/maturity']

Actually, it would be easier to start with the latter part of unit numbered 19 above:

I wonder whether (part of unit 19)

my heart which left me (part of unit 20)

desiring the soft shoulders of the young woman with bright forehead,  
sweet words, and bashfulness blended with profundity (part  
of unit 20)

leaving the hills (unit 9)

where the rhythmic beat from the mortar(s) pounded with  
ornamental pestles

raised by women with thin curly hair (unit 7)

alternates with the owls in the tall dark mountain (unit 8)

in the small town with nice residences (unit 6)

that is close to the forest (unit 6)  
 where in the elevated path, red like coral (unit 5)  
 the soft ends of the stamens, sweet as butter,  
 scratched all inside the red copper-like shoots of the  
*iruppai* tree  
 which has put out buds resembling the tips of  
 shining arrows  
 that are tightly packed in the quivers  
 by bowmen for the task of killing (unit 1)  
 developed holes that one can see, and (unit 2)  
 loosening from their calyx (unit 3)  
 are scattered by the wind resembling a sky with hail (unit 4)  
 urged by strength, and (unit 10)  
 without thinking that the (woman's) town is far away (unit 11)  
 moving faster than me who hastens the rushing horses (unit 12)  
 reaching quickly, and (unit 13)  
 staying on one side of the tall good house, perfect in many aspects  
 (unit 14)  
 reaching her who, in the evening when calves return home,  
 is waiting and praying everytime the lizard in the vicinity calls  
 (unit 15)  
 going with cupped fingers (unit 16)  
 getting close and covering (her) eyes (unit 17)  
 touching (her) back (which is soft) like the trunk of a female elephant  
 (unit 18)  
 immersed (in her) as (her) hands wearing bracelets caressed (it)  
 (part of unit 19)

The following breakpoints can be identified in this poem: *iruppai*, *kuḷai*  
*akam tōru*, *tuy vāy*, *uḷutu*, *tuḷaiya āki*, *kaḷalpu*, *pāri*, *iyaviṇ*, *parikkum*,

attam, cīrūr, pāṇi, kuṇru, pōki, turantu, eṇātu, viraintu, eyti, ṇilaii, eyti, cenru, kuṛuki, tīṇṭi, tōyntanru kollō, meṇ tōḷ, nacaii, and neñcē.

The poem opens with a description of arrows. The first significantly meaningful unit (kol viṇai ... uḷutu) consists of the breakpoints **iruppai**, **kuḷai akam tōru**, **tuy vāy**, and **uḷutu**. This unit can be divided into several sub-units:

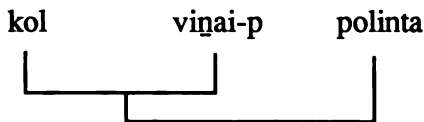
- i) kol viṇai p polinta kūrṇ kuṛum puḷukiṇ villōr tūṇi vīṅka p  
peyta appu nuṇai ēyppa arumpiya **iruppai** c
- ii) ceppu aṭar aṇṇa ceṅkuḷai **akam tōru**
- iii) iḷutiṇ aṇṇa tīm puḷal tuy vāy uḷutu

The first of these sub-units can be further divided into the following parts, all of which modify the noun **appu**:

- (A) kol viṇai p polinta
- (B) kūrṇ kuṛum puḷukiṇ
- (C) villōr tūṇi vīṅka p peyta

The part marked “(A)” is of this structure:

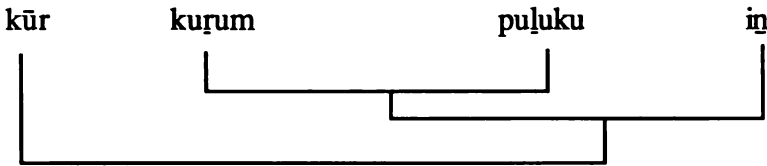
verb stem (**kol**) - noun (**viṇai**) - past adjp (**polinta**)



The verb stem **kol** ‘to kill’ and the noun **viṇai** ‘task’ result in the compound **kol viṇai** ‘the task of killing.’ The consonant **p** resulting from the doubling of the initial consonant of **polinta** ‘shining’ suggests a case relation between

**polinta** and the preceding word **vinai**. By convention, the case relation in this context is understood to be dative. Therefore, **kol vinai p polinta** joined with the head noun **appu** means ‘arrows shining for the act of killing.’ The part marked “(B)” has this structure:

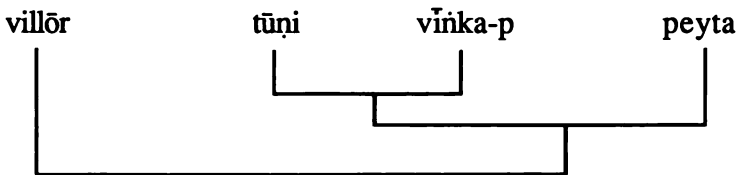
verb stem (**kūr**) - adjective (**kuṛum**) - noun (**puḷuku**) - case marker (**in**)



The juxtaposition of **kūr** ‘sharp’, **kuṛum** ‘small/little’, and **puḷuku** ‘arrow heads’ produces the compound **kūrṇ kuṛum puḷuku** ‘sharp little arrow heads’, whereas the genitive case marker **in** awaits the conjoining of the head noun **appu**. Taken together, **kūrṇ kuṛum puḷukin appu** means ‘arrows which have sharp and little (arrow) heads.’

The part marked “(C)” has this structure:

adjectival noun (**villōr**)-noun (**tūṇi**)-infinitive (**vīṅka**)-past adjp (**peyta**)



The adjectival noun **villōr** ‘bowmen’ is the subject of the adjectival participle **peyta** (< **pey** ‘to pour, place’), while the noun **tūṇi** ‘quiver’ is the subject of the infinitive **vīṅka** (< **vīṅku** ‘to swell’). Also **vīṅka** modifies



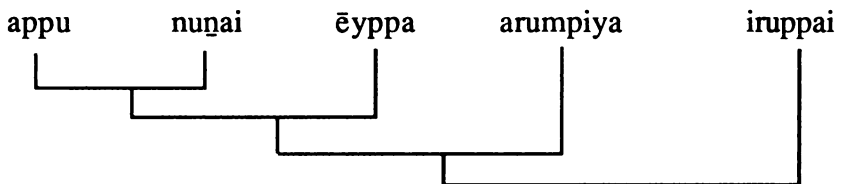
**peyta** like an adverb. The phrase **villōr tūṇi vīṅka p peyta** has a larger adjectival clause **villōr ... peyta** which contains an infinitive clause **tūṇi vīṅka**. Taken together with the head noun **appu**, the phrase **villōr tūṇi vīṅka p peyta appu** means 'arrows which bowmen placed (and as a result of which) the quivers swelled up.'

The larger phrase **kol vinai p polinta kūrṇ kuṛum pulukin villōr tūṇi vīṅka p peyta appu** consisting of the three parts (A), (B), and (C) means:

'Arrows shining for the task of killing  
(arrows) with sharp little arrow heads  
(arrows) which bowmen placed making the quivers swell up'

The opening description of arrows (mis)leads one into thinking that it is a war poem. The suspense continues and will until the later part the poem.

The next sub-unit starts with a noun (**nunai** 'tips') which bears a genitive case relation with the head noun **appu** discussed above, and develops into a noun phrase containing an infinitive (**ēyppa** < **ēy** 'to resemble'), a past adjectival participle (**arumpiya** < **arumpu** 'to bud'), and a noun (**iruppai** 'iruppai tree[s]').

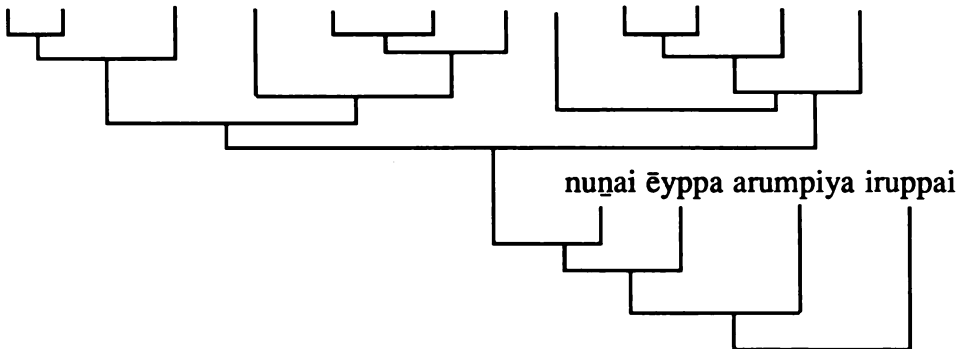


Note that **iruppai** is the breakpoint which ends this sub-unit. The phrase **nunai ēyppa arumpiya iruppai** means 'iruppai trees which have budded like the tips ...', an incomplete sense. When the genitive case relation

between **appu** and **nunai** is considered, the meaning of **appu nunai ēyppa arumpiya iruppai** is complete: 'iruppai trees, budded like the tips of arrows.'

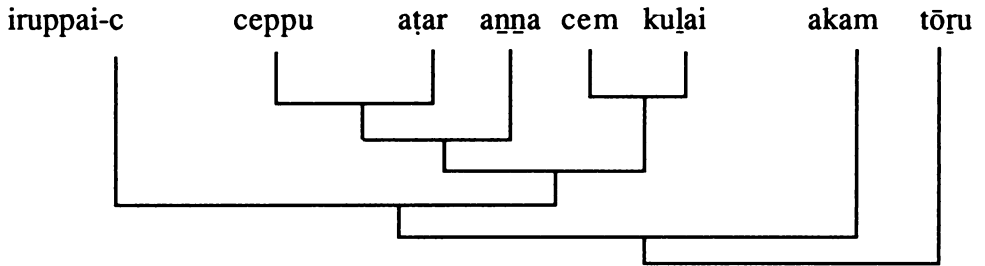
At this point, the earlier information about the arrows has to be brought into the picture, so the two sub-units **kol viṇai p polinta kūṁ kuṟum pulukin villōr tūṇi vīṅka p peyta appu** and **nunai ēyppa arumpiya iruppai** can be put together: iruppai trees in which buds like the sharp little tips of arrows, which bowmen pack (their) quivers with, have emerged'

kol viṇai-p polinta kūṁ kuṟum puluku-in villōr tūṇi vīṅka p peyta appu



Note that the breakpoint **iruppai** bears a semantic relation to the next breakpoint **akam tōru**. The description of arrows is now developing into a description of a specific kind of tree.

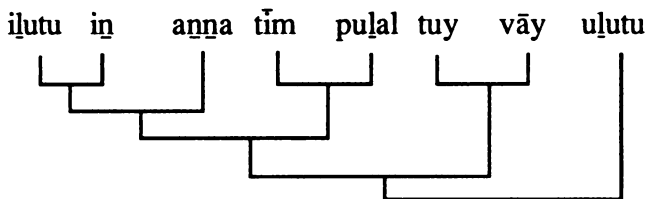
The next sub-unit begins with a compound **ceppu aṭar** 'copper sheets' and proceeds to develop into a postpositional phrase consisting of a particle (**anna** 'like'), a compound (**ceṅkuḷai** 'red leaves'), a nominal (**akam** 'inside, within'), and a postposition (**tōru** 'everywhere, all over'). This sub-unit ends with the breakpoint **akam tōru** which is linked semantically to the preceding word **ceṅkuḷai** (which in turn is linked to the previous breakpoint **iruppai**) and the next breakpoint **ulutu**.



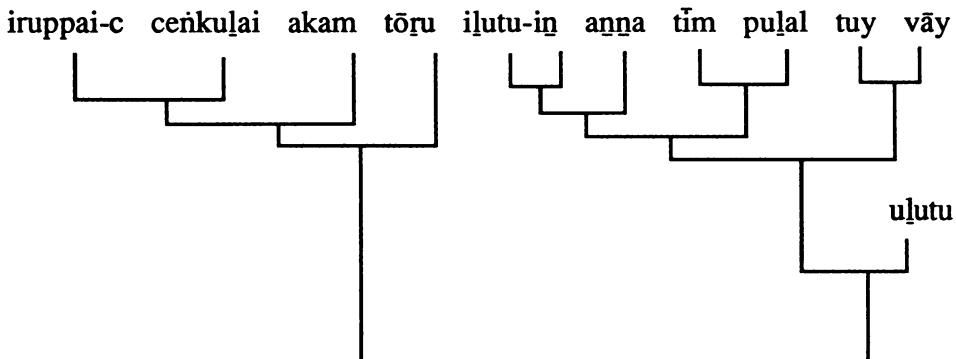
‘everywhere inside the **iruppai**’s red leaves which are like copper sheets’

In this sub-unit, the particle of comparison **aṇṇa** connects the two compounds **ceppu aṭar** and **ceṇkuḷai**. As a result, a noun phrase emerges: **ceppu aṭar aṇṇa ceṇkuḷai** ‘red leaves like copper sheets.’ This noun phrase when taken together with the postpositional phrase **akam tōru** ‘everywhere inside, within’ means ‘everywhere inside the red leaves which are like copper sheets.’ The semantic link between the two breakpoints **iruppai** and **akam tōru** adds another dimension to the description the poem has been engaged in so far.

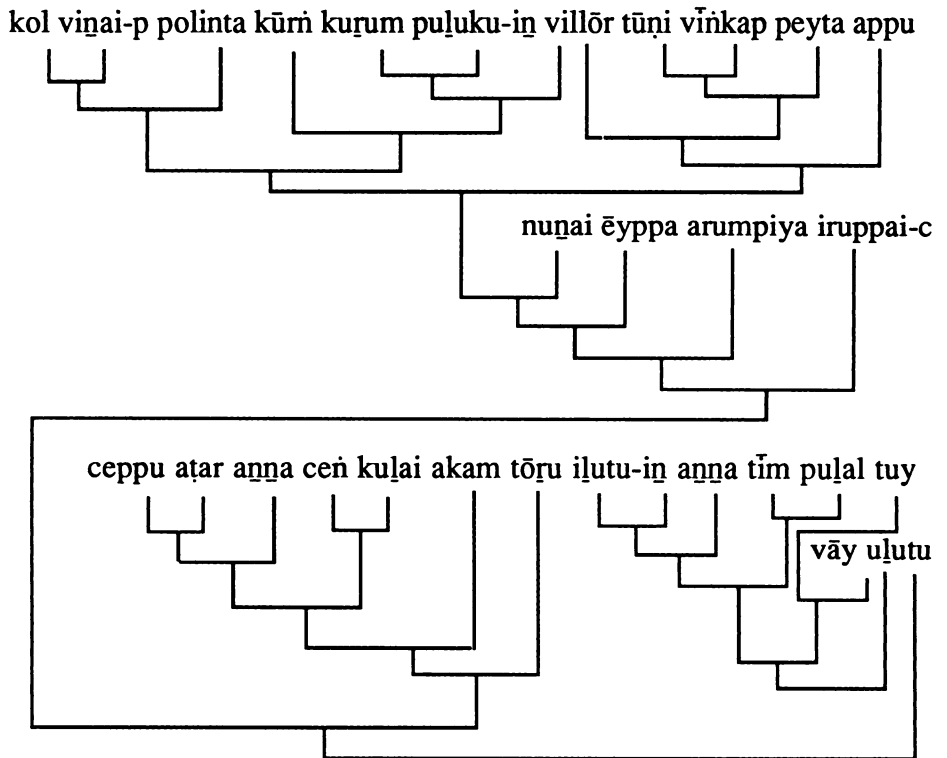
One has to wait for an interpretation of the next sub-unit to find out what happens to the red leaves of the **iruppai** trees. The next sub-unit **iḷutin aṇṇa tīm puḷal tuy vāy uḷutu** is a verb clause ending with the breakpoint **uḷutu**.



Where do these stamens scratch? The previous breakpoint **ceṅkuḷai akam tōru** and the breakpoint **uḷutu** in the present sub-unit should be connected to know that the stamens scratched inside the leaves of the **iruppai** trees. **iruppai c ceṅkuḷai akam tōru ilutin anna tīm puḷal tuy vāy uḷutu** ‘the stamens scratched all inside the **iruppai**’s red leaves which are like copper sheets.’



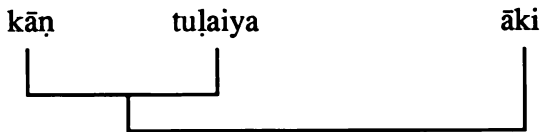
Thus, the very first meaningful unit starting with **kol viṇai** and ending with **uḷutu** provides a description of the **iruppai**'s leaves and stamens. In particular, it focuses on what the stamens do.



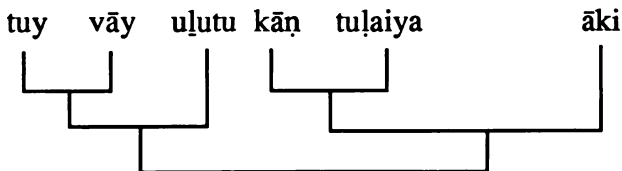
Now, the breakpoint **uḷutu** is semantically linked to the next breakpoint **āki** in the next meaningful unit **kāṇ tuḷaiya āki**.

Actually, next two meaningful units (**kāṇ tuḷaiya āki** and **ār kaḷalpu**) tell the reader what happens to the stamens. The first of them (**kāṇ tuḷaiya āki**) is a verb clause beginning with a verb stem (**kāṇ** 'to see'),

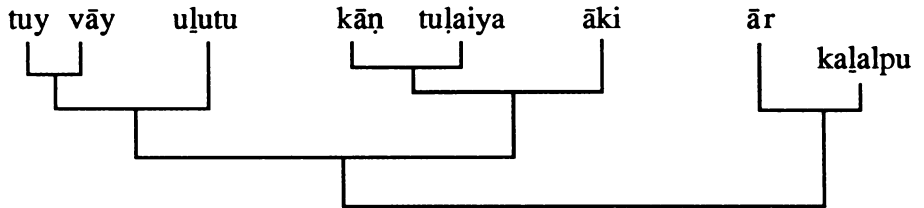
followed by an adjectival noun (**tuḷaiya** < **tuḷai** 'holes'), and an adverbial participle (**āki** < **āku** 'to become') which is the breakpoint here.



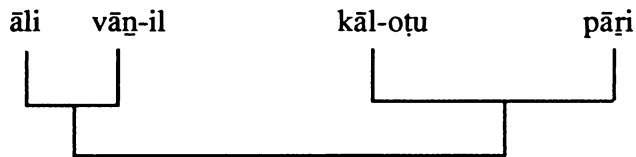
The subject (**tuy vāy**) of this clause (**kāṇ tuḷaiya āki**) is the same as that for the previous clause (**iruppai ... uḷutu**). The phrase **kāṇ tuḷaiya āki** can be interpreted to mean 'turned into X with visible holes.' When taken together with its subject, the clause **tuy vāy ... kāṇ tuḷaiya āki** means 'stamens with soft tips developed visible holes ..., and ...'



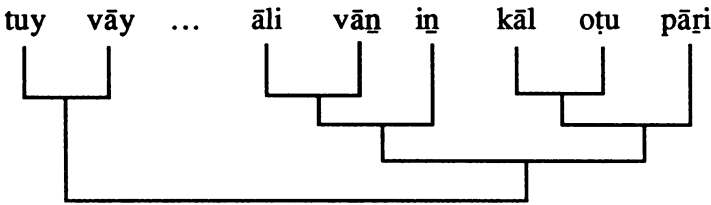
The next unit **ār kaḷalpu** has a noun (**ār** 'calyx'), and an infinitive (**kaḷalpu** < **kaḷal** 'to loosen') which is a breakpoint. The subject is **tuy vāy**. Therefore, **tuy vāy ... ār kaḷalpu** means 'stamens with soft tips loosened from their calyx.' Now one can arrange the subject **tuy vāy** with its successive adverbial participles **uḷutu**, **āki**, and **ār kaḷalpu**.



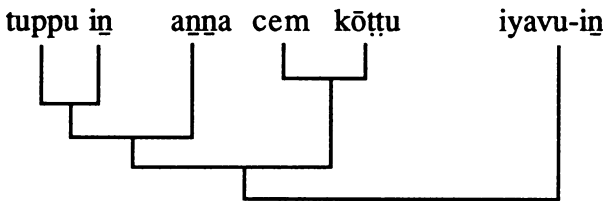
At this point, the poem seems to take a turn from the description of arrows it started with to that of some stamens. Next three meaningful units inform the reader what the stamens do next. The first of them (**āli vāṇil kāloṭu pāri**) is a verb clause comprised of two smaller phrases (**āli vāṇ** and **kāloṭu pāri**).



The whole verb clause contains the nouns **āli** 'hail', **vāṇ** 'sky', and **kāl** 'wind.' It has the case markers **in** and **oṭu**. The adverbial participle (**pāri** < **pāru** 'to scatter') here is a breakpoint. **āli vāṇ** means 'sky with hail' and **kāloṭu pāri** means 'scattered by the wind.' The marker **in** provides a comparative sense 'like' and connects **āli vāṇ** and **kāloṭu pāri**: **āli vāṇin kāloṭu pāri** 'scattered by the wind resembling a sky with hail, and ... .' The subject **tuy vāy** helps to develop the meaning 'the stamens ... were scattered by the wind resembling a sky with hail.'



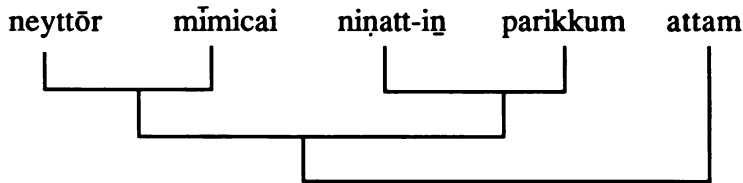
The next meaningful unit **tuppin anna ceṅkōṭṭu iyavin** is a noun phrase beginning with **tuppu** 'coral' and ending with the breakpoint **iyavin**. It contains three nouns (**tuppu** 'coral', **kōṭu** 'elevation', and **iyavu** 'path'). The case marker in the phrase is **in**. In addition, there is a comparative particle (**anna**) and an adjective (**cem** 'red'). The noun **kōṭu** appears in its oblique form (**kōṭṭu**). While **anna** connects **tuppin** and **cem kōṭṭu**, the latter forms a noun phrase with the next word **iyavu**. Therefore, **tuppin anna cem kōṭṭu iyavu** means 'the red elevated path, like coral.' The case marker **in** appended to **iyavu** gives a locative sense: **tuppin anna cem kōṭṭu iyavin** 'in the elevated path, red like coral.'



One does not know what happens in this red elevated path until one interprets the next unit (**neyttōr mīmīcai niṇattir parikkum**) together with the preceding meaningful units. The noun phrase **neyttōr mīmīcai niṇattir parikkum** contains the nouns **neyttōr** 'thick blood' and **niṇam** 'fat.' The noun **niṇam** appears in its oblique form **niṇatt** and is followed by the case marker **in** 'like.' In this unit, there is also a postposition (**mīmīcai** 'upon, over') and a non-past adjectival participle (**parikkum** <



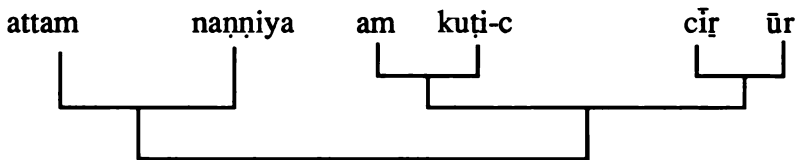
**pari** ‘to spread’). Here, **neyttōr mīmīcai** forms a postpositional phrase meaning ‘over blood’, whereas **niṇattīr parikkum** ‘spreads like fat’ explains what happens over the blood. The subject of the adjectival participle **parikkum** is **tuy vāy**, the soft ends which are described in the earlier part of the poem. The word **attam** which follows **parikkum** completes the sense of the adjectival participle **parikkum**, so one understands that the soft ends of the stamens described above are scattered on the red elevated path in the forest: **tuy vāy ... āṛ kaḷalpu kāloṭu pāri neyttōr mīmīcai niṇattīr parikkum attam** ‘the forest where the soft ends of the stamens, scattered by the wind, spread on the elevated coral-like red path resembling fat over blood.’



To recapitulate, one can think of the units considered so far as constituting a large noun phrase beginning with **kol vīnai** and ending with **attam**. It is worth noting that **attam** is not the subject of the main sentence of the poem. The poem opened as if it was describing a war, but has now turned its focus to nature. What happens in the forest is told in the next few meaningful units.

The next unit **attam naṇṇiya am kuṭi c cīrūr** is a noun phrase beginning with the noun **attam** ‘forest’ and ending with another noun **cīrūr** ‘small town.’ Here, the subject of the past adjectival participle **naṇṇiya** (< **naṇṇu** ‘to be close’) is the preceding word (**attam** ‘forest’). In this unit, **am** ‘beautiful, pleasant’ is an adjective modifying the noun **kuṭi** ‘residence’ which in turn bears a genitive case relation to **cīrūr**. The

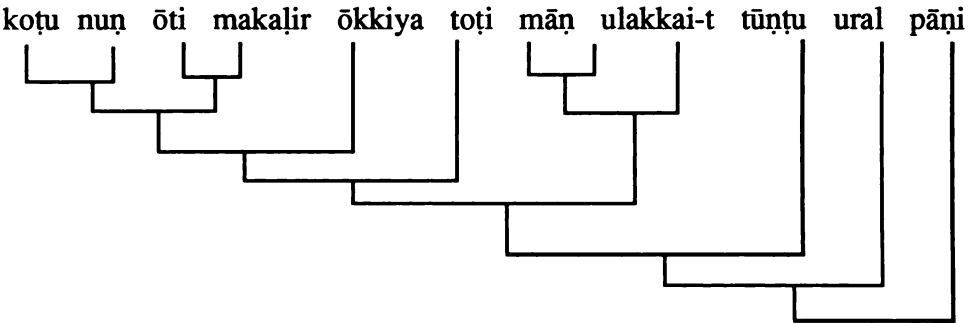
case relation is indicated by the doubling of the initial consonant in **cīrūr**. The compound **am kuṭi c cīrūr** means 'small town with nice residences.' The connection among **attam**, **naṇṇiya**, and **cīrūr** yields the interpretation 'the town which is close to the forest.'<sup>12</sup>



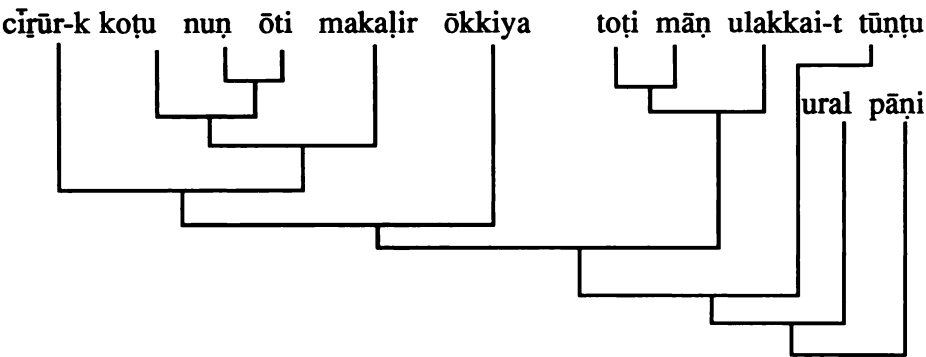
Now the poem is beginning to turn its attention to society. The relevance of the forest to the town is revealed in the next two units (**koṭu nuṇ ṓti makaḷir ōkkiya toṭi māṇ ulakkai t tūṇṭu ural pāṇi** and **neṭu māl varaiya kuṭiṇaiyōṭu iraṭṭum kunru**). The first of these units is a noun phrase beginning with an adjective (**koṭu** 'bent, curved') and ending with a noun (**pāṇi** 'rhythmic beat'). The adjective (**koṭu**) is followed by these items in a sequence: an adjective (**nuṇ** 'fine, smooth'), two nouns (**ṓti** 'hairdo' and **makaḷir** 'women'), a past adjectival participle (**ōkkiya** < **ōkku** 'raise, lift'), another noun (**toṭi** 'bracelet, ring'), a verb stem (**māṇ** 'to be perfect'), a noun (**ulakkai** 'pestle'), a verb stem (**tūṇṭu** 'to pound'), and two nouns (**ural** 'mortar' and **pāṇi** 'rhythmic beat'). The larger noun phrase **koṭu nuṇ ṓti makaḷir ōkkiya toṭi māṇ ulakkai t tūṇṭu ural pāṇi** contains three small compounds (**koṭu nuṇ ṓti makaḷir**, **toṭi māṇ ulakkai**, and **tūṇṭu ural pāṇi**). The subject of the adjectival participle **ōkkiya** is the head noun (**makaḷir**) of the preceding compound, whereas its object (**ulakkai**) is the head noun of the following compound. The noun **ulakkai**

<sup>12</sup> In fact, this phrase **attam naṇṇiya ... cīrūr** is ambiguous and allows a slight change of focus in these interpretations: 'forest which is near the small town'; 'small town which is near the forest.'

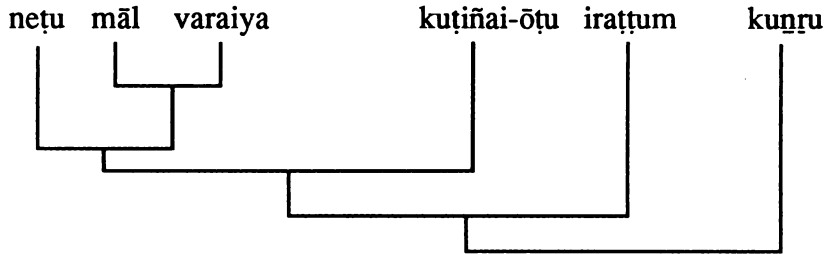
‘pestle’ is the head noun of the compound **toṭi māṇ ulakkai** and serves as the subject of the next verb **tūṇṭu** ‘to pound’ which has **ural** ‘mortar(s)’ as its object. The noun **ural** has a case relation with the noun **pāṇi** ‘rhythmic beat.’ Put together, **koṭu nuṇ ṓti makaḷir ōkkiya toṭi māṇ ulakkai t tūṇṭu ural pāṇi** can be interpreted to mean literally ‘the rhythmic beat from the mortar(s) pounded with pestles which are elegantly covered with rings and raised by women wearing fine curly hair.’ The basic idea is that women are pounding the mortar(s) with pestles and a rhythmic beat arises from the pounding.



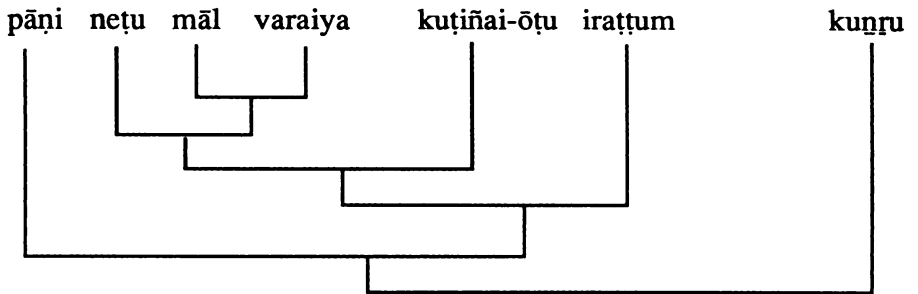
Where are these women? They are in the small town described in the phrase **am kuṭi c cīrūr** discussed above. A locative case relation between **cīrūr** and **koṭu nuṇ ṓti makaḷir** is indicated by the doubling of the initial consonant of **koṭu** which follows **cīrūr**.



What does the rhythmic beat of the pestles do? The answer is given in the next unit (**neṭu māl varaiya kuṭiṇaiyōṭu iraṭṭum** ‘alternates with the owls in the tall dark mountain’). The breakpoint (**pāṇi**) in the last unit is the subject of this unit (**neṭu māl varaiya kuṭiṇaiyōṭu iraṭṭum**) which ends with an adjectival participle (**iraṭṭum**) completed by the next breakpoint (**kunru** ‘hill[s]’). The unit **neṭu māl varaiya kuṭiṇaiyōṭu iraṭṭum** is composed of two adjectives (**neṭu** ‘tall’ and **māl** ‘dark’), an adjectival noun (**varaiya** < **varai** ‘mountain’), a noun (**kuṭiṇai** ‘owls’), a case marker (**ōṭu** ‘with’), and a non-past adjectival participle (**iraṭṭum** < **iraṭṭu** ‘to alternate’). The completing nominal of the adjectival participle (**iraṭṭum**) here is **kunru**, which comes next. **neṭu māl varaiya kuṭiṇai** itself is a compound meaning ‘owls which are in the tall dark mountain.’ When the head noun of this compound (**kuṭiṇai**) is connected with **iraṭṭum kunru** by the associative case marker **ōṭu**, the noun phrase **neṭu māl varaiya kuṭiṇaiyōṭu iraṭṭum kunru** means ‘hill(s) where ... alternates with the owls in the tall dark mountain.’

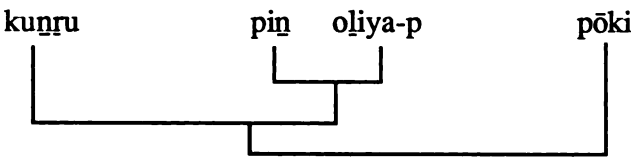


Considering the noun **pāṇi** ‘rhythmic beat’ to be the subject of the phrase **neṭu māl varaiya kuṭiñaiyōṭu iratṭum kuṇru**, the larger noun phrase **pāṇi neṭu māl varaiya kuṭiñaiyōṭu iratṭum kuṇru** gives a description of the hill(s): ‘hill(s) where the rhythmic beat alternates with the owls in the tall dark mountain.’ It was said in the units discussed above that the pestles are the source of the rhythmic beat.

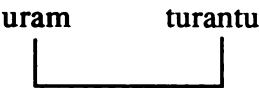


Now the poem is taking a stroll through the forest, mountains, and hills. The subject of the main sentence is not yet disclosed. The word **kuṇru** is connected to the next meaningful unit by functioning as the object of the infinitive (**oliya**) in it. The next meaningful unit **pin oliya p pōki** contains a nominal (**pin** ‘behind’), an infinitive (**oliya** < **oli** ‘to disappear from sight’), and an adverbial participle (**pōki** < **pō** ‘to go’).

The infinitive clause **pin oliya** and the adverbial participle **pōki** are connected in such a way that **oliya** could be taken to provide a resultive or purposive sense. Basically, **kunru pin oliya p pōki** means ‘X went and the hills disappeared behind X.’ The subject of the adverbial participle **pōki** is the subject of the main sentence in the poem, but will not be revealed until one reaches the very last word.

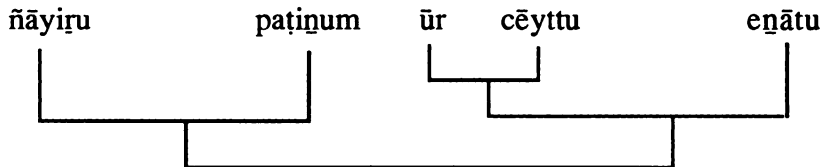


The rest of the poem consists of relatively smaller meaningful units, most of them ending with an adverbial participle, while each adverbial participle is linked semantically to the next. The next meaningful unit **uram turantu** contains a noun (**uram** ‘strength’) and an adverbial participle (**turantu** < **tura** ‘to urge’). The phrase **uram turantu** means ‘urged by strength.’



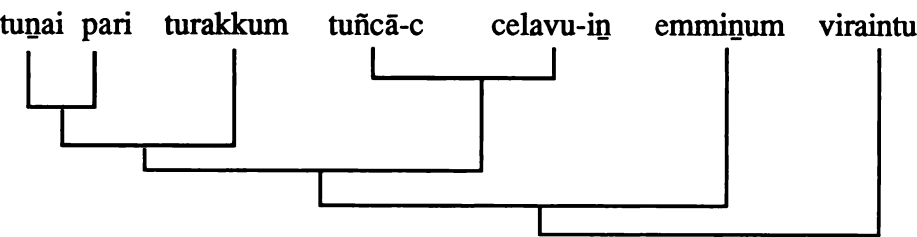
The subsequent meaningful unit **ñāyīru paṭinum ūr cēyttu enātu** is an adverbial clause and has two nouns (**ñāyīru** ‘the sun’ and **ūr** ‘town’). It also contains a concessive of fact (**paṭinum** ‘although the sun has set’), an adjectival noun (**cēyttu** ‘is far away’ < **cēy** ‘distance’), and a negative adverbial participle (**enātu** ‘without saying/thinking’ < **en** ‘to say’). The noun **ñāyīru** is the subject of the verb underlying the concessive of fact **paṭinum** which in turn provides a factual situation for the negative adverbial participle **enātu**. The adverbial clause **ñāyīru paṭinum ūr cēyttu enātu**

subsumes a small sentence **ūr cēyttu** ‘The town is far away’ which is followed by the adverbial participle (**enātu**). Thus, **ūr cēyttu enātu** means ‘without saying/thinking “The town is far away.”’ The whole adverbial clause (**ñāyīru paṭiṇum ūr cēyttu enātu**) means ‘although the sun has set, ... without thinking “The town is far away” ...’



The next meaningful unit (**tunai pari turakkum tuñcā c celavin emminum viraintu**) begins with a verb stem (**tunai** ‘to rush’), and develops into an adverbial participle clause by including a noun (**pari** ‘horse[s]’), a non-past adjectival participle (**turakkum** < **tura** ‘to hasten’), a negative adjectival participle (**tuñcā** < **tuñcu** ‘to procrastinate, delay’), a verbal noun (**celavu** < **cel** ‘to go toward a destination’), a case marker (**in**), a pronoun in comparative form (**emminum** < **em** ‘us’ + **inum**), and an adverbial participle (**viraintu** < **virai** ‘to rush’). The two words **emminum** and **viraintu** give the meaning ‘rushing faster than us/me.’ The rest of the words form a noun phrase with the pronoun **em** as the head noun. The non-past adjectival participle **turakkum** and the verbal noun **celavu** in its declined form (**celavin**) modify the head noun **em**. The object of this adjectival participle (**turakkum**) is **pari** that forms the compound **tunai pari** ‘horses which are rushing’ with the preceding verb stem **tunai**. Thus, **tunai pari turakkum** literally means ‘that which hastens the horses which are rushing.’ The negative adjectival participle **tuñcā** is the object of **celavu** (**tuñcā c celavu** ‘the undelayed journey’). Joined together with **tunai pari turakkum** on one side and **in** and **emminum** on the other,

**tunai pari turakkum tuñcā c celaviñ emminum** means ‘more than I (hon.) who am on an undelayed journey hastening the rushing horses.’ The adverbial participle **viraintu** adds the sense ‘moving faster’ to ‘more than I who am on an undelayed journey, hastening the rushing horses.’ Therefore, the verb clause **tunal pari turakkum tuñcā c celaviñ emminum viraintu** can be interpreted as ‘moving faster than me who is on an undelayed journey and hastens the rushing horses.’ The poem seems to take another turn here by introducing the narrator’s identity in the first person honorific **em**.



The next unit **val eyti** has an adverb (**val** ‘quickly, fast’) and an adverbial participle (**eyti** < **eytu** ‘to reach’) giving the sense ‘reaching quickly.’

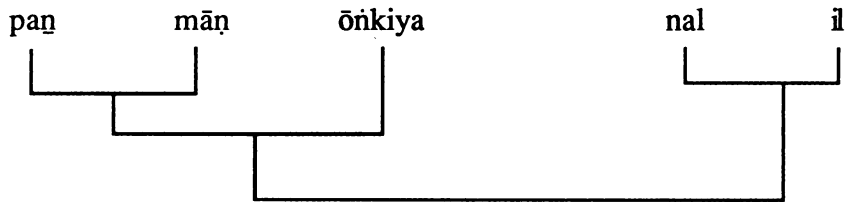


The subsequent unit is a long verb clause (**pañ māñ òñkiya nal il oru ciṛai nilaii p pāñkar p palli paṭu toṛum paravi k kañru puku mālai ninrōḷ eyti**). This clause contains the following smaller parts: **pañ māñ òñkiya nal il**, **oru ciṛai nilaii**, **pāñkar p palli paṭu toṛum paravi**, and **kañru puku mālai**. These smaller parts add up to form a larger noun

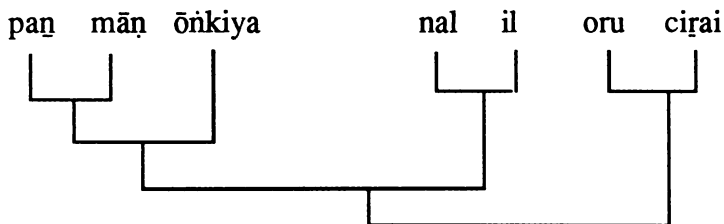


phrase with the head noun **ninrōl** which is the object of the next adverbial participle **eyti**.

The part **paṇ māṇ ōṇkiya nal il** is itself a noun phrase and has two adjectives (**paṇ** < **pal** 'many' and **nal** 'good'). There is also a verb stem (**māṇ** 'to be perfect, elegant'), a past adjectival participle (**ōṇkiya** < **ōṇku** 'to be tall'), and the head noun (**il** 'house'). The adjective **paṇ** modifies **māṇ** which in turn modifies **il**. The noun **il** is also modified by **ōṇkiya** and **nal**. Altogether, the noun phrase **paṇ māṇ ōṇkiya nal il** means 'the tall good house which is perfect/elegant in many (aspects).'

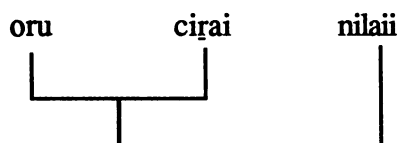


The head noun (**il**) of this phrase (**paṇ māṇ ōṇkiya nal il**) bears a genitive case relation to the next phrase **oru ciṛai**, where **oru** means 'one' and **ciṛai** means 'side.' The phrases **paṇ māṇ ōṇkiya nal il** and **oru ciṛai** add up to mean 'on one side of the tall good house, perfect in many (aspects).'

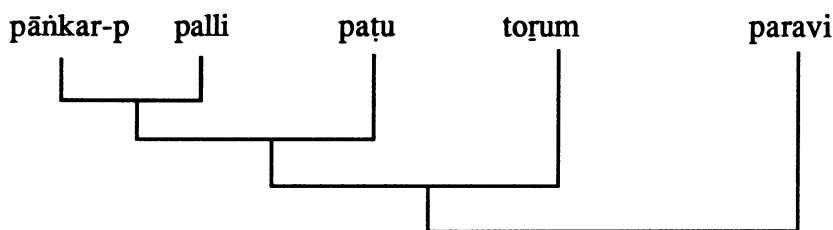


The phrase **oru ciṛai** bears a locative case relation to the following

adverbial participle (**nilaii** < **nil** 'to stand'). Therefore, **oru ciṛai nilaii** means 'standing on one side.' Note that the subject of **nilaii** is not yet mentioned.

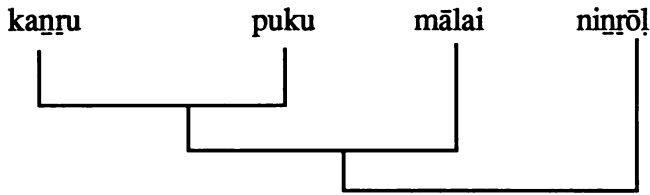


The part **pāṅkar p palli paṭu torum paravi** is a verb clause consisting of the following: two postpositions (**pāṅkar** 'side; same side' and **torum** 'every [time]'), a noun (**palli** 'gecko'), a verb stem (**paṭu** 'to sound'), and an adverbial participle (**paravi** < **para[vu]** 'to pray'). The sequence **pāṅkar p palli paṭu torum** forms a postpositional phrase holding a locative connection with the adverbial participle (**paravi**). The postpositional phrase means 'whenever the gecko in the vicinity sounds' (**pāṅkar p palli** 'the gecko on one side'; **paṭutorum** 'whenever X sounds'). The addition of **paravi** to this phrase provides 'praying whenever the gecko in the vicinity sounds.'

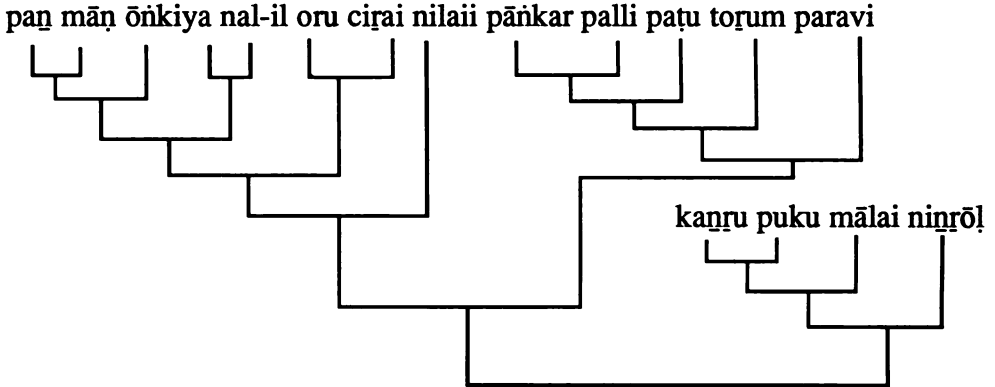


The subject of **paravi** is **ninrōḷ** 'she who stood', a past participial noun derived from **nil** 'to stand, stay.' It is found in the next part **kanru puku mālai ninrōḷ**. The compound **kanru puku mālai** containing the

nouns **kaṇru** 'calves' and **mālai** 'evening' and the verb stem **puku** 'to enter' means 'evening when calves enter/return (home).'

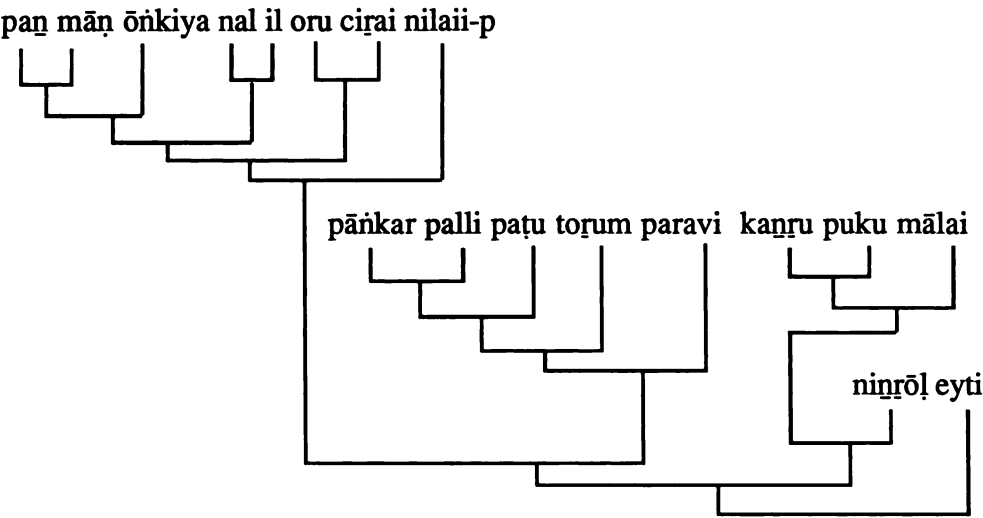


The larger noun phrase which begins with **paṇ māṇ** and ends with **ninrōḷ** informs the reader about a woman waiting for someone.

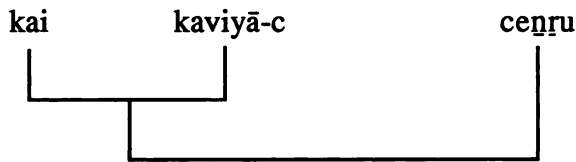


The word **ninrōḷ** is the object of the adverbial participle **eyti**. The verb clause embedding the larger noun phrase beginning with **paṇ māṇ** and ending with **ninrōḷ** is **paṇ māṇ ṓṇkiya nal il oru ciṛai nilaii p pāṇkar p palli paṭu toruṁ paravi k kaṇru puku mālai ninrōḷ eyti**. It can be interpreted to mean 'reaching her who stood on one side of the tall good manifold elegant house, praying everytime the gecko in the vicinity

sounds.’ Note that the subject of the adverbial participle **eyti** is not yet revealed.

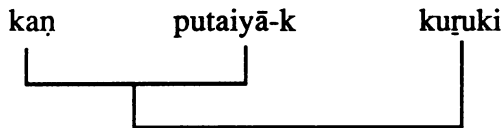


The next meaningful unit is **kai kaviyāc cenru** containing a noun (**kai** ‘hand[s]’), an infinitive (**kaviyā** < **kavi** ‘to fold’), and an adverbial participle (**cenru** < **cel** ‘to go’). It means ‘going with folded hands.’

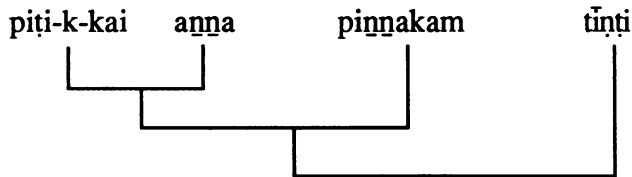


The subsequent meaningful unit **kaṇ putaiyā k kuṛuki** has a noun (**kaṇ** ‘eye[s]’), an infinitive (**putaiyā** < **putai** ‘to cover, bury’), and an adverbial participle (**kuṛuki** < **kuṛuku** ‘to get close’). The whole clause

means 'reaching closely and covering ... eyes.' Whose eyes are covered by whom? The mystery will be resolved soon.



The next meaningful unit (**piṭi k kai anna pinṇakam tīṇṭi**) contains a few nouns (**piṭi** 'female elephant', **kai** 'arm, hand, trunk of an elephant', and **pinṇakam** 'back side; inside of the back'), a particle of comparison (**anna**), and an adverbial participle (**tīṇṭi** < **tīṇṭu** 'to touch'). The whole clause means 'touching the (inner) back which is like the trunk of a female elephant.'

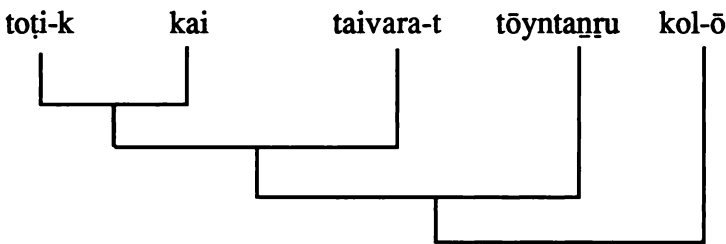


The next meaningful unit **toṭi k kai taivara t tōyntanru kollō** has a finite verb. It begins with the noun **toṭi** 'bracelet' and is followed successively by another noun (**kai** 'hand, arm'), an infinitive (**taivara** < **taivaru** 'to caress'), a finite verb (**tōyntanru** < **tōy** 'to lean, indulge in'), and a particle (**kollō**).

The major parts of this unit are **toṭi-k-kai**, **taivara**, and **tōyntanru kollō**. **toṭi-k-kai** 'hands with bracelets' is a compound consisting of two stems (**toṭi** 'bracelet' and **kai** 'hand'). The infinitive **taivara** provides the sense 'as ... caressed.' The personal verb **tōyntanru** means 'it in-

dulged/leaned’, and the particle **kollō** gives the senses of wonder and rhetorical question. Thus, **tōyntanru kollō** could be taken to mean ‘whether it indulged (I wonder)?’

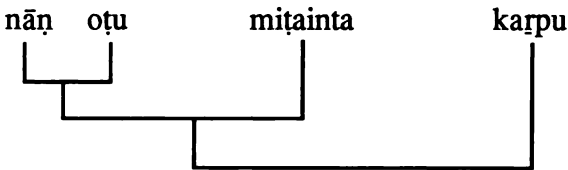
When all the words in this unit (**toṭi k kai taivara t tōyntanru kollō**) are put together, the phrase means ‘(I wonder) whether it indulged as the hands wearing bracelets caressed (it)?’ At this point there is an indication about the subject of the finite verb (**tōyntanru**) that it is neuter singular.



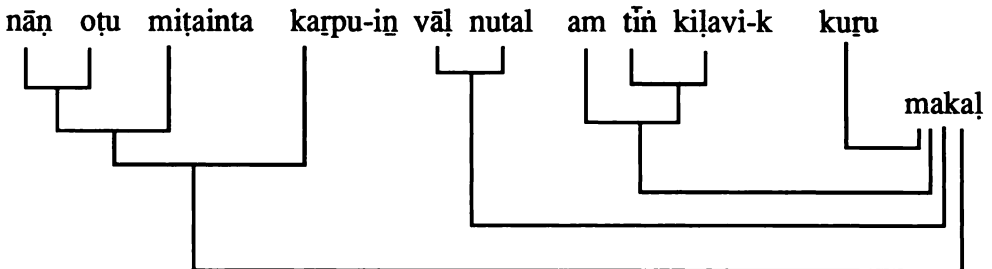
The final meaningful unit is fairly large. It is a noun phrase beginning with a declined noun (**nāṇ** ‘bashfulness’ + **oṭu** case marker ‘with’) and ending with a noun (**neñcu** ‘heart’) followed by a particle (**ē**). The noun **neñcu** is the subject of the main sentence in the poem. The unit **nāṇoṭu miṭainta karpiṇ vāḷ nutal am tīṇ kiḷavi k kuṛu makaḷ meṇ tōḷ peṛa nacaii cenra eṇ neñcē** is composed of the following items: the nouns **nāṇ** ‘bashfulness’, **karpu** ‘maturity, profundity’, **nutal** ‘forehead’, **kiḷavi** ‘word(s)’, **makaḷ** ‘woman’, **tōḷ** ‘shoulder(s)’, and **neñcu** ‘heart’; the oblique pronoun **eṇ** ‘my’ (< **yāṇ** ‘I’); associative case marker **oṭu**; genitive case marker **iṇ**; the adjectives **vāḷ** ‘bright’, **am** ‘beautiful’, **tī(m)** ‘sweet, pleasant’, **kuṛu** ‘short, small’, and **meṇ** ‘soft’; past adjectival participles **miṭainta** (< **miṭai** ‘to braid, blend’) and **cenra** (< **cel** ‘to leave for a destination’); infinitive **peṛa** (< **peṛu** ‘to obtain’); adverbial participle **nacaii** (< **nacai** ‘to desire’), and the particle **ē**. The infinitive **peṛa** provides a purposive sense completed by the adverbial participle **nacaii**.

Among these words, the noun **neñcu** is the “subject” of three items: infinitive **peṛa**, adverbial participle **nacaii**, and adjectival participle **cenra**. The noun phrase beginning with **nāṇoṭu** and ending with **tōl** is the object of the infinitive (**peṛa**). The smaller noun phrase **nāṇoṭu miṭainta karpu**, **vāl nūtal** and the compound **am tīñ kiḷavi** modify **kuṛu makal** which itself is a compound.

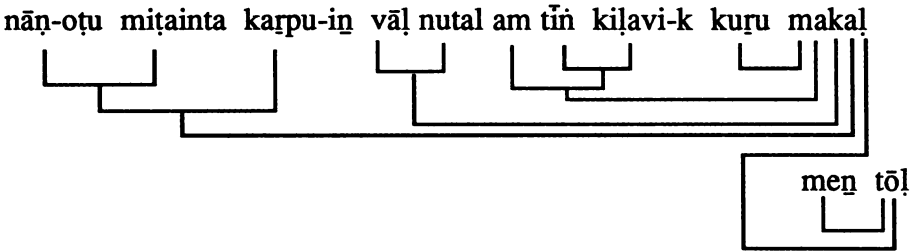
The head noun **karpu** of the phrase **nāṇoṭu miṭainta karpu** is declined for the genitive case and marked by **in**. When all the individual items here are interpreted (**nāṇ** ‘bashfulness’, **oṭu** ‘with’, **miṭainta** ‘braided, blended’, **karpu** ‘profundity’), **nāṇoṭu miṭainta karpu** means ‘profundity blended with bashfulness.’



The next phrase **vāl nūtal** means ‘bright forehead’, while **am tīñ kiḷavi** means ‘beautiful, sweet words.’ Three phrases (**nāṇoṭu miṭainta karpin**, **vāl nūtal**, and **am tīñ kiḷavi**) modify **kuṛu makāl** ‘short/small woman’ which describes a certain woman: ‘the small woman, with profundity blended with bashfulness, bright forehead, and soft sweet words.’

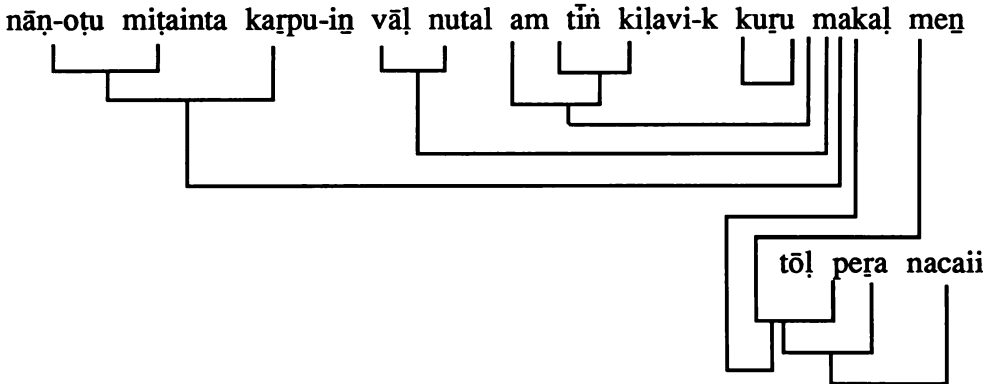


This entire phrase has a genitive relation with the following compound (**men tōl** 'soft shoulders'). Then, starting from **nāṇ** and finishing with **tōl**, the interpretation is: 'soft shoulders of the small/young woman with bright forehead, profundity blended with bashfulness, and soft sweet words'

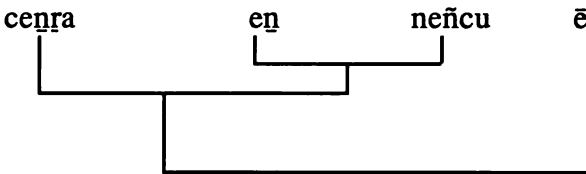


This phrase serves as the object of the infinitive **pera** 'to obtain' which in turn is linked to **nacaii**. The clause beginning with **nāṇ** and ending with **nacaii** therefore means 'desiring/wanting to obtain the soft shoulders of the small woman with bright forehead, who has maturity blended with bashfulness and sweet gentle words.'

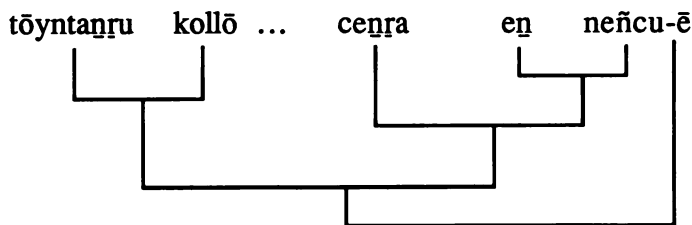




The word **cenra** in the next phrase (**cenra eṇ neñcu**) makes sense when combined with its completing nominal **neñcu** although a pronoun in its oblique form intervenes between them. The phrase means ‘my heart which (has) left.’ When the preceding adverbial participle **nacaī** with its fullest details is combined with this phrase, more information about the subject **neñcu** is revealed: ‘my heart which (has) left (me), desiring the soft shoulders of the small woman with bright forehead, maturity blended with bashfulness, and sweet gentle words.’ The particle **ē** in **neñcē** can be understood as ending the poem as well as giving a sense of emphasis or similar sentiment.



When **tōyntanru kollō** is taken together with **neñcē** the reader understands that the subject of the main sentence in the poem is **neñcu** and the finite verb is **tōyntanru**.



The poem is complete now, with the subject of the main sentence revealed as the very last word, **neñcu** 'heart.' The basic idea is expressed in the narration of the hero's rhetorical question to himself. The question is: Whether my heart which left (me) desiring the soft shoulders of (my) small woman, indulged (in that pleasure) as her hands caressed it? The rest of the poem describes how the narrator's heart rushed to reach his woman, the path in which the heart travelled, the house where the woman was waiting, and how the heart might have approached the woman.

A joyful translation<sup>13</sup>:

*Buds of iruppai emerge  
like arrow tips stuffed  
into swelling quivers,  
heads small and sharp, bright  
for their task of killing.  
Shoots red as copper  
plates and in them  
the hollow stamens sweet  
as butter scratch holes you can see  
with their soft ends.*

<sup>13</sup> This translation was done by George L. Hart.

*Petals grow loose,  
spread in the wind like  
rain and hail, on steep paths  
red as coral, they spread  
like fat on thick blood.  
Near that wilderness,  
a little town:  
women with thin curling hair  
raise fine pestles with  
ornamental rings and beat  
their mortars, and their rhythm  
seems to echo the crying  
of the owls on high, dark hills.  
And I pass by, I leave them behind  
urged by strength  
hurrying even when the sun  
falls, it seems my home is  
close, horses speed, and I go  
never slowing their pace.  
Yet,  
even faster,  
reaching even sooner  
standing on one side of our fine  
high house as she prays  
every time the lizard calls  
on the wall, in the evening  
when cows go home, he comes  
and curving his arms around her,  
covers her eyes and touches her back  
soft as the trunk of a female  
elephant, caressed by*

*her bangled hand:  
my woman, chaste and modest,  
forehead bright, words  
so sweet  
My heart has already  
gone to her,  
covering her soft arms, my heart  
has already found its joy.*



## SECTION 8

## APPENDIX

NOTE: Basically, this appendix contains various affixes, case markers, postpositions, particles, and pronouns. Accompanying each entry in the first list containing the suffixes, etc. are examples and the names of chapters (or paragraphs in some cases) where the entry under consideration or similar examples are discussed. The entries given in italicized type represent the forms of affixes and other items which the reader may identify as items following the stems used in classical Tamil poems. The entries given in non-italicized bold type represent the actual forms of these items as they are discussed in the preceding pages in this volume.

- a

(An item preceding the following suffixes is a bare verb stem, oblique stem, non-oblique stem, past stem ending with a consonant, or a stem followed by the glide y:

-a, -ala, -arka, -ana, -āarka, -āka, -āta, -ika, -iya, -ina, -īiya, -īka, -uka, -una, -una, -ēka, -aikka, -kka, -kkuna, -ka, -kallāta, -kuva, -ta, -na, -ppa, -ppana, -pa, -pana, -va, -vana)

adjectival nouns — kāla, katava, kuḷaviya, maratta, numa,  
iniya, tamiya, kālana, eruttina

adverbs — initāka, nakaiyāka

case markers and postpositions — avara, ninna, nina (yānai)

imperative/optative — unara, vāliya, cenraikka, cirakka, ākuka,  
keṭuka, varuka

infinitive — cuṛra, una, vara, tānkiya, unarttiya, coliya, kuṭikkiya,  
veḷiya, tāva, marakka, niṛka, pukuta, marappa, niṛpa

metonymy and metaphor — vāḷ matilāka

negative adjectival participle — ariyāta, olkāta, kaḷikallāta

negative imperative/optative — vārarka, maraārka, cēṛērka

negative participial nouns — ceyyāta, innātana

negative personal verbs — peyarala

non-past adjectival participle — cēṛkinnra, aṭūuninnra

non-past participial nouns — piraḷna, vittuna, taṭukkuna,  
niraikkuna, aruppana, koṭpana, koḷvana, varippa, vēṇtupa,  
tōnnruva

non-past personal verbs — uḷa, nīppa, eytupa, kaluḷpa, keṭuva,  
paṭukuva, takaippana

past adjectival participle — tāaya, tokka, aṭṭa, ēṛra, uṇta,  
kāṭta, uyaṛnta, pōna, pōkiya, cēṛttiya, valliya, iṛṇiya, āyina,  
tuvarina, ānnra, uḷuta, kōṭta, uyaṛtta, tokutta, payanta, arunta,  
oḷinta

past participial nouns — vēṇtiya, māṇṭana, oṛiyina

past personal verbs — vaḷiya, nīnkiya, ceyta, puḷittana, paḷinta,  
tāyina



**-aḥtu**

**-aḥtu**

adjectival nouns — *tollaḥtu*

**-akku**

**-k(k)(u), akk(u), ukk(u)**

case markers and postpositions — *niṇakku, emakku*

**-akam**

**-akam**

case markers and postpositions — *nāḷakam*

**-attai**

**-attai**

particles — *paṇiyiyar attai*

**ataṇāl**

**ataṇāl**

causal — *ataṇāl*

**-atu**

**-atu**

adjectival nouns — *yāṇatu, maṭavatu, kuḷampinatu*

case markers and postpositions — *kaṭavuḷatu (iyarkai),  
nōṇpinatu (aḷavu)*

negative participial nouns — *peṛātatu*

negative personal verbs — *tōṇṇalatu*

non-past participial nouns — *poykkuvatu, citaikuvatu, uvappatu,  
uṇpatu, uṇuvatu*

non-past personal verbs — *vēvatu*

non-past verbal nouns — *kiḷippatu, mukiḷppatu, kāṇpatu,  
varuvatu, urivatu, muṭivatu*

past participial nouns — *yāttatu, uḷḷiyatu, ventatu*

past personal verbs — *ceṇṇratu*

verbal nouns — *niṇṇratu*

**-atai**

**-atai**

adjectival nouns — *kaiyatai*

non-past verbal nouns — *varuvatai*

past participial nouns — *ūmtatai*

past personal verbs — vantatai, tāl̥ttatai  
 verbal nouns — nekiḷntatai, aṭippaṭuttatai, varuvatai

*antil*

**antil**

particles — varumē cēyiḷai antil

*antō*

**antō**

particles — antō tāṇē

*-am*

**-am**

adjectival nouns — uiyram, palam  
 imperative/optative — āṇrikam, ayaṁt̥ikam  
 negative personal verbs — vēṇṭalam, piriyalam, toṭukalam  
 non-past participial nouns — ariyunam  
 non-past personal verbs — aṇcuvam, kāṇkam, cērukam,  
 kāṇkuvam, peṭkuvam  
 particles — poṇ am kompu, teṇ am kumari  
 past participial nouns — ciṇantaṇam  
 past personal verbs — kaṭintaṇam, kēṭṭaṇam, vēṇṭiṇam  
 verbal nouns — ōccam, uyakkam, veṇṇam, tōṇṇam

*amma/ammā*

**amma/ammā**

particles — amma (vāḷi tōḷi), (kāmamum oṇru eṇpa) ammā

*ayal*

**ayal**

case markers and postpositions — malai ayal

*-ar*

**-ar**

adjectival nouns — kūntalar, villar, ciṇāar, nalattar, tēettar,  
 cākāṭṭālar, valaiṇar, viṇainar, nutaliyar, nōṇpiyar, kōṭṭaiyar,  
 kāṭiṇar, nūṇṇiṇar, pakaivar, nakaivar  
 case markers and postpositions (vocative) — makāaar  
 imperative/optative — tēyar  
 infinitive — pēṇiyar, kaṭīiyar  
 negative participial nouns — oṇṇalar, poruntalar

negative imperative/optative — mācu ilīyar  
 negative personal verbs — ceyyalar, aṛiyalar  
 non-past participial nouns — vallar, aṛiyālar, eṛiñar, pāṭunar,  
 uḷarnar, kuyinar, kāṇunar, uṇunar, aṛainar, īkunar,  
 malarkkunar, kāṇmar, nacaivar, viraivaṇar  
 non-past personal verbs — uḷar, maṛappar, kāṇpar, varuvar,  
 ayaṛvar, koṭukkuvar, peṛukuvar  
 past participial nouns — valliyar, vēṇṭiṇar  
 past personal verbs — maṛantaṇar, kūṛiṇar  
 verbal nouns — vevvar

**-avar**

adjectival nouns — illavar, puṇarppiṇavar  
 negative participial nouns — arulātavar, uraikkallātavar  
 non-past participial nouns — iruppavar, kolpavar  
 past participial nouns — āyavar, tuṛantavar, naṭṭavar

**-arō****-arō**

particles — kuyil ālum arō

**-al****-al**

imperative/optative — kāval, tiṛattal  
 non-past personal verbs — uraippal, kāṇpal, vaḷval, varuval,  
 kāṇkuval  
 verbal nouns — keṭal, ariyal, maṛaval, uṇakkal, pōkkal, oḷukal,  
 ūṭṭal, akaṛṛal

**-(ā)al**

negative imperative/optative — peyaraḷ, viṭāal

**alla**

(nominal + **al**\_\_)

negative al and il — ariya alla

**allatu**

(conditional + **allatu**)

negative al and il — kaḷiyiṇ allatu

(nominal+ **al(l)atu**)

negative al and il — peruntakai allatu

*allatai*(nominal + **allatai**)

negative al and il — oļintamai allatai

*allam*(nominal + **al**\_\_)

negative al and il — vēru allam

*allar*(nominal + **al**\_\_)

negative al and il — aŗavar allar, nīŗunar allar

(negative personal verb + **al** \_\_)

negative al and il — illaiyum allar, vēļār allar

(personal verb + **al**\_\_)

negative al and il — celvār allar, uyntaņar allar

*allaļ*(nominal + **al**\_\_)

negative al and il — maruntu allaļ

(negative personal verb + **al** \_\_)

negative al and il — vēņŗāļ allaļ

(personal verb + **al**\_\_)

negative al and il — vāļkuvaļ allaļ

*allan*(nominal + **al**\_\_)

negative al and il — koŗiyaņum allan

(personal verb + **al**\_\_)

negative al and il — uņarkuveņ allan, īkuvaņ allan

*-allā***-ā**

negative adjectival participle — paŗakkallā, nuļaikallā

(nominal + **allā**)

negative al and il — vāy allā veņmai

*-allāta***-āta**

negative adjectival participle — kaļikallāta

*-allātavar*

*-avar*

negative participial nouns— *uraikkallātavar*

*allāl*

(conditional + *allāl*)

negative *al* and *il* — *periṇ allāl*

(nominal + *allāl*)

negative *al* and *il* — *pakai allāl*

*allāṇ*

(nominal + *al*\_\_)

negative *al* and *il* — *makaṇ allāṇ*

*allir*

(personal verb + *al*\_\_)

negative *al* and *il* — *nīṭṭuvir allir(ō)*

*allīr*

*-īr*

negative imperative/optative— *tolukallīr*

*allēm*

(nominal + *al*\_\_)

negative *al* and *il* — *kiḷaiṇārēm allēm*

(negative personal verb + *al* \_\_)

negative *al* and *il* — *kēlēṁ allēm, celvēṁ allēm (eṇṇār)*

(personal verb + *al*\_\_)

negative *al* and *il* — *uṇkuvam allēm, kāṇēm allēm*

*allēṇ*

*-ēṇ*

negative personal verbs — *porukkallēṇ, amaikallēṇ*

(nominal + *al*\_\_)

negative *al* and *il* — *nāṇ allēṇ*

(negative personal verb + *al* \_\_)

negative *al* and *il* — *ilēṇum allēṇ*

(personal verb + *al*\_\_)

negative *al* and *il* — *viṭukkuveṇ allēṇ, uṭaliṇēṇ allēṇ*

*allai*(nominal + **al**\_\_)

negative al and il — pētai allai

(personal verb + **al**\_\_)

negative al and il — varuvai allai

*allōr*(nominal + **al**\_\_)

negative al and il — puraiyar allōr

*alkalum***alkalum**

collectives and universals — alkalum aḷutal

*-ala***-a**

negative personal verbs — peyarala

*alatu***-atu**

negative personal verbs — tōṇṇalatu

(nominal + **alatu**)

negative al and il — nī alatu

*-alam***-am**

negative personal verbs — vēṇṭalam, piriyalam, toṭukalam

*-alar***-ar**

adjectival nouns — māṇṇalar, āṇṇalar

negative participial nouns — oṇṇalar, poruntalar

negative personal verbs — ceyyalar, ariyalar

*-alaḷ***-aḷ**

negative personal verbs — piḷaiyalaḷ

*-alaṇ***-aṇ**

negative personal verbs — amaikalaṇ, moḷiyalaṇ

(nominal + **al**\_\_)

negative al and il — kēḷ alaṇ

**-alām**

(verbal noun + ām)

potential — porukkal ām (varaittu)

**-aliyarō**

**-iyarō**

negative imperative/optative — tavāaliyarō

**-alir**

**-ir**

adjectival noun — nakāalir

negative personal verbs — kaḷaḷalir

**-alen**

**-en**

negative personal verbs — vēṇṭalen

**-alēṇ**

**-ēṇ**

negative personal verbs — maṛavalēṇ, uḷḷalēṇ, aṛikalēṇ

(nominal + al\_\_\_)

negative al and il — tiyēṇ alēṇ

**-alai**

**-ai**

negative imperative/optative — poruntalai

negative personal verbs — kāṇalai, oḷukalai

**-avar**

**-avar**

adjectival nouns — illavar, puṇarppinavar

negative participial nouns — aruḷātavar, taḷarātavar, uraikkallātavar

non-past participial nouns — iruppavar, koḷpavar

past participial nouns — āyavar, tuṛantavar, naṭṭavar

**-avaḷ**

**-avaḷ**

adjectival nouns — nallavaḷ, tuṛakkattavaḷ

past participial nouns — kāttavaḷ

non-past participial nouns — uṇarppavaḷ, nērpavaḷ

**-avan**

**-avan**

adjectival nouns — viṛalavan

past participial nouns — vantavan

negative participial nouns — aḷuntātavan

non-past participial nouns — uḷappavan, varaipavan

**-avir**

**-avir**

adjectival nouns — ūravir

past participial nouns — cāṇravir, kaṇṭavir

**-avai**

**-avai**

adjectival nouns — kālavai, nēmiyavai, ampiṇavai

non-past participial nouns — uṭuppavai, urukupavai

past participial nouns — aṭṭavai, citariyavai

past personal verbs — ēntiṇavai

**-aḷ**

**-avaḷ**

adjectival nouns — nallavaḷ, tuṛakkattavaḷ

past participial nouns — kāttavaḷ

non-past participial nouns — uṇarppavaḷ, nērpavaḷ

**-aḷ**

adjectival noun — ciṛumaiyaḷ, tilakattaḷ, cumaṭṭiṇaḷ

negative personal verbs — piḷaiyaḷ, melintilaḷ

non-past participial nouns — maṇṇunaḷ, niṇaiyunaḷ, celkuvaḷ,  
niṇaivaṇaḷ

non-past personal verbs — uvakkuvaḷ, kalaṅkuvaḷ, eṇpaḷ,  
varuntuvaḷ, nāṇuvaḷ

past participial nouns — vēṭṭanaḷ, kāttavaḷ

past personal verbs — ēyaḷ, koṇṭanaḷ, viṇaviṇaḷ, toṭaṅkiṇaḷ,  
kavaiiyaṇaḷ, tuṭaiyiṇaḷ

**aḷavu**

**aḷavu**

case markers and postpositions — vaiyaka varai aḷavu, muṇṇum  
aḷavu



*aḷavai*

**aḷavai**

case markers and postpositions — valippaḷavai, muyalvaḷavai

*-arka*

**-ka**

negative imperative/optative — vāraṛka, maṛāaṛka

*-aṇ*

**-avaṇ**

adjectival nouns — viralavaṇ

past participial nouns — vantavaṇ

negative participial nouns — aḷuntātavaṇ

non-past participial nouns — uḷappavaṇ, varaipavaṇ

**-aṇ**

adjectival nouns — pēṇalaṇ, kaṇṇiyaṇ, mālaiyaṇ, kacciyaṇ, kaḷaliṇaṇ, naṇṇarāḷaṇ, kolaivaṇ, vilaivaṇ

case markers and postpositions — ataṇ niraṇ

negative personal verbs — amaikalaṇ, moḷiyalaṇ

non-past participial nouns — kāmuṇaṇ, viraivaṇaṇ, etirkoḷvaṇ  
varaipavaṇ

non-past personal verbs — uḷaṇ, akaḷkkuvaṇ, varukuvaṇ,

karappaṇ, māṛruvaṇ, varuvaṇ

oblique stem — ataṇ

past participial nouns — aṇciṇaṇ ātal

past personal verbs — ceytaṇaṇ, tīrttaṇaṇ, peyarntaṇaṇ,  
tāṅkiṇaṇ, taḷiyyiṇaṇ

**-ā(a)ṇ**

negative personal verbs — peṛāaṇ

*-aṇmār*

**-mār**

negative personal verbs — kēḷaṇmār

*-aṇmin*

**-min**

negative imperative/optative — koḷḷaṇmin

*aṇmai***aṇmai**

negative verbal nouns — iṇumpūtu aṇmai

*aṇri***-i**

negative adverbial participle — āṭiyatu aṇri

*aṇṇa***-aṇṇa**

comparison — ciṇaku aṇṇa, kalattaṇṇa, vāmtaṇṇa

*aṇṇō***aṇṇō**

particles — kaṇṇum taṇ paṇi vaikiṇa aṇṇō

*aṇru/āṇrō*(nominal + **a**l\_\_)

negative al and il — kār aṇru

(personal verb + **a**l\_\_)

negative al and il — civappāl aṇru, ikaḷntārē aṇrō

**-tu**

past personal verbs — niṇraṇru

*-aṇa***-a**

adjectival nouns — kālāṇa

past personal verbs — pulittaṇa

negative participial nouns — iṇṇātāṇa

non-past participial nouns — aṇuppaṇa, koṭpaṇa, koḷvaṇa

non-past personal verbs — takaippaṇa

past participial nouns — māṇṭaṇa, niṇaiiyaṇa

*-aṇam***-am**

past participial nouns — ciṇantaṇam

past personal verbs — kēṭṭaṇam, kaṭintaṇam

*-aṇar***-ar**

past personal verbs — maṇantaṇar

-aṇaḥ

-aḥ

non-past participial nouns — niṇaivaṇaḥ

past participial nouns — vēṭṭaṇaḥ

past personal verbs — koṇṭaṇaḥ

-aṇaṇ

-aṇ

past personal verbs — ninṇaṇaṇ, ceytaṇaṇ, tīrttaṇaṇ,  
peyaṇtaṇaṇ

-aṇār

-ār

non-past participial nouns — eṇmaṇār

-aṇāl

-āl

case markers and postpositions — ataṇāl

-aṇir

-ir

past personal verbs — ottaṇir

past participial nouns — tuṇintaṇir

-aṇin

-in

comparison — itaṇin koṭiyatu

-aṇem

-em

past personal verbs — iṇpuṇṇaṇem

-aṇeṇ

-eṇ

non-past participial nouns — viraivaṇeṇ

past personal verbs — vantaṇeṇ

-aṇēṇ

-ēṇ

past personal verbs — takaittaṇēṇ

-aṇai

-ai

adjectival nouns — notumalāḷaṇai

past personal verbs — *Īttaṇai*

*aṇaittum*

**aṇaittum** or **aṇaittu \_\_um**

collectives and universals — *aṇaittum nī, aṇaittiṇ uṭporuḷum*

-*ā(a)*

-*ā*

case markers and postpositions — *arukā, mēlā, amararkkā*

interrogative — *tantālā*

negative personal verbs — *āṭā*

-*ā(a)*

infinitive — *maṛaiyā, paṭāa, koḷāa*

negative adjectival participle — *kalaṅkā, ĩyā, niṇaiyā, cāvā,*

*pōkā, koṭāa, paṛakkallā, nuḷaikallā*

negative adverbial participle — *aṛiyā, viṭāa*

negative participial nouns — *ovvā, uṭāa, pōrā*

-*ā(ka)*

adverbs — *iṇṇātā*

-*ikā*

imperative/optative — *kāṇikā, kāṇṭikā*

-*āaar*

**vocative**

case markers and postpositions — *makāaar*

-*āatu*

-*ā(a)tu*

negative adverbial participle — *kuṛāatu*

-*āam*

-**um**

non-past adjectival participle — *avāam*

-*āamal*

-*ā(a)mal*

negative adverbial participle — *peṛāamal*

-*āamai*

-*ā(a)mai*

negative adverbial participle — *vaḷāamai*

-āar

-ar

adjectival nouns — ciṛāar

-āal

-al

negative imperative/optative — viṭāal

-āaliyarō

-iyarō

negative imperative/optative — tavāaliyarō

-āalir

-ir

adjectival nouns — nakāalir

-āarka

-ka

negative imperative/optative — maṛāarka

-āaṇ

-ā(a)ṇ

negative personal verbs — peṛāaṇ

-āka

-ā(ka)

adverbs — iṇitāka, nakaiyāka

(noun + noun + āka)

metonymy and metaphor — vāḷ matil āka

āṅka

āṅka/āṅku/āṅkē

particles — āṅka (iṇpamum kaviṇum aḷuṅkal mūtūr)

āṅkaṇ

āṅkaṇ

case markers and postpositions — potiṇi āṅkaṇ

āṅku/āṅkē

āṅka/āṅku/āṅkē

particles — āṅku (am mū iru mukaṇum), (aṅciyatu) āṅkē  
(aṇaṅku ākum)

āṅku

adverbs — peṭṭāṅku

case markers and postpositions — niṇṇāṅku  
comparison — atimtāṅku, nivaṇtāṅku

-āta

-āta

negative adjectival participle — olkāta, aṇiyāta, kaḷikallāta  
negative participial nouns — ceyyāta

-ātatu

-atu

negative participial nouns — peṇātatu

-ātavar

-avar

negative participial nouns — aruḷātavar, taḷarātavar,  
uraikkallātavar

-ātavaṇ

-avaṇ

negative participial nouns — aḷuntātavaṇ

-ātana

-ātana

adjectival nouns — iṇṇātana

-ātā

-ā(ka)

adverbs — iṇṇātā

-ātāy

-āy

negative participial nouns — uṇarātāy

-ātār

-ār

negative participial nouns — naḷḷātār

-ātāl

-āl

negative participial nouns — vālātāl

-ātāṇ

-āṇ

negative participial nouns — utavātāṇ

- āti  
-i  
negative imperative/optative — varuntāti
- ātīm  
-īm  
negative imperative/optative — cellātīm
- ātīmē  
-īmē  
negative imperative/optative — ceppātīmē
- ātīmō  
-īmō  
negative imperative/optative — aḷātīmō
- ātīr  
-īr  
negative participial nouns — aṛiyātīr pōla
- ātu  
-ātu  
adjectival nouns — kuṇātu  
case markers and postpositions — taṇātu  
negative personal verbs — āṇātu, cāvātu, amaikallātu
- ā(a)tu  
negative adverbial participle — āṇātu, aṛiyātu, kainniṛukkallātu,  
ivarkallātu
- tu  
adjectival nouns — iṇṇātu
- ātē  
-ātē  
negative adverbial participle — cūlātē
- ātēṇ  
-ēṇ  
negative participial nouns — tuñcātēṇ
- ātōy  
-ōy  
negative participial nouns — tārātōy  
negative personal verbs — aṛiyātōy

- ātōr*  
 -*ōr*  
 negative participial nouns — uṇarātōr, oṇṇātōr
- ātōḷ*  
 -*ōḷ*  
 negative participial nouns — kaṭiyātōḷ
- ātōṇ*  
 -*ōṇ*  
 negative participial nouns — koḷḷātōṇ
- ām*  
 -*ām*  
 adjectival nouns — iruvām  
 negative personal verbs — eyyām  
 non-past personal verbs — kēḷām, niṇruppām, kāṇpām, iruvām, celvām  
 past participial nouns — puṇarntām  
 past personal verbs — kōṭpaṭṭām  
 (personal verb + *ām*)  
 potential — uṇṭām, uyyumām  
 (verbal noun + *ām*)  
 potential — porukkal ām varaittu
- āmal*  
 -*ā(a)mal*  
 negative adverbial participle — toypaṭāmal
- āmai*  
 -*ā(a)mai*  
 negative adverbial participle — aṇiyāmai  
 -*mai*  
 negative verbal nouns — nalkāmai, varaiyāmai
- āy*  
 -*āy*  
 adjectival nouns — kātalāy, katuppiṇāy  
 adverbs — iṇaiciyāy, iyalpiṇṇāy  
 imperative/optative — kēḷāy, kāṇṭaiyyāy  
 negative participial nouns — uṇarātāy, aṇikallāy pōṇi



negative personal verbs — kātṭāy, ariyāy, tarukallāy

non-past participial nouns — mēyppāy

non-past personal verbs — tuṟappāy, poyppāy, eṇpāy, pōkuvāy

past participial nouns — kuṟittāy, karutiyāy

past personal verbs — nīṭṭittāy, pārāṭṭināy

#### **vocative**

case markers and postpositions — nēriḷāy, katalāy, kiḷaviyāy

**-āyiṭai**

#### **-āyiṭai**

case markers and postpositions — (imayam teṇ am kumariyoṭu) āyiṭai

**-āyiṇum**

#### **-um**

concessive of fact ("although") — (moli peyar tēttar) āyiṇum

concessive of supposition ("even if") — (tamiyaḷ) āyiṇum

**-ār**

#### **-ār**

adjectival nouns — nucuppār, neñcinār

negative participial nouns — poyyār, cālār, pōṟṟār, mēvār, onṇār, nallātār, āyvantilār

negative personal verbs — uḷḷār, ceyyār, amaiyār, tīrkkalār, amaikallār, ōvār, koḷḷār, koḷār

non-past participial nouns — nekilppār, eṇpār, cāaymār, viḷuvār, aṟivār, eṇmaṇār

non-past personal verbs — tuṟappār, iṟaiṇcuvār

particles — nōvumār (peritē), neṟiyumār (atuvē)

past participial nouns — nalkūmtār, onṟiṇār

past personal verbs — cāyttār, ūṭiṇār

#### **-mār**

negative participial nouns — kēḷaṇmār

negative imperative/optative — kēḷaṇmār

**-ārkaḷ**

#### **-ār(kal)**

non-past participial nouns — vālṽvārkaṭku (vālṽvārkaḷ + ku)

-āḷ

**ataṇāl**

causal — ataṇāl

**-āl**

conditional — kaṇṭāl, eṇṛāl, āṇāl

negative imperative/optative — poyyāl

particles — naṇṛāl, aritāl

verbal nouns — koḷāl

**-āl/āṇ**

case markers and postpositions — poriyāṇ (maññai), pōrāl,  
ataṇāl, talaiyiṇāl, marattāl, vitiyāṇṛāl

(conditional + **allāl**)

negative al and il — peṛiṇ allāl

(nominal + **allāl**)

negative al and il — pakai allāl

-ālum

**-um**

concessive of supposition — eṇṛālum

-āḷ

**-āl**

adjectival nouns — alkuḷāl, katuppiṇāl

negative participial nouns — vālātāl

negative personal verbs — aṇiyāl, uṇarkallāl

non-past participial nouns — nōy uḷappāl, eṇpāl, āṭuvāl

non-past personal verbs — celvāl

past participial nouns — īṇṛāl

past personal verbs — uraittāl, pōyiṇāl

-āḷar

**-ar**

adjectival nouns — cākāṭṭāḷar

non-past participial nouns — aṇiyāḷar

-āḷaṇ

**-aṇ**

adjectival nouns — naṇṇarāḷaṇ

**-āḷaṇai**

**-ai**

adjectival nouns — notumalāḷaṇai

**-āru**

**-āru**

case markers and postpositions — tāṇ vēṇṭum āru

**-āṇ**

**-ā(a)ṇ**

negative personal verbs — cūṭāṇ, pōkāṇ, uraikkallāṇ

**-āṇ**

adjectival nouns — ūrāṇ, perumāṇ, muraciṇāṇ

causal — oḷukalāṇ, uṇmaiyaṇ

negative participial nouns — aṇam cārāṇ, utavātāṇ

non-past participial nouns — nuḷaippāṇ, eṇpāṇ, cuṭuvāṇ pōla

non-past personal verbs — oḷippāṇ, amaivāṇ, parivāṇ, amaikuvāṇ

past participial nouns — kaṭṭiyaṇ, uṇṇiyaṇ, ceytāṇ, poyttāṇ

past personal verbs — koṇṭāṇ, vikkiṇāṇ, malaintāṇ, pārttāṇ

**-āl/āṇ**

case markers and postpositions — poriyāṇ (maṇṇai), (kīl)

nīrāṇ (mīṇ vaḷaṅkuntu)

**-pāṇ (p + āṇ)**

infinitive — kāṇpāṇ

**-vāṇ (v + āṇ)**

infinitive — kuḷaivāṇ, nīkkuvāṇ

**-āṇāl**

**-āl**

conditional — āṇāl

**-āṇum**

**-āṇum**

concessive of fact — illāṇum

concessive of supposition — eṇṇāṇum

**yā\_\_um**

collectives and universals — yārkkāṇum

- āṇmin
- min negative imperative/optative — nakāṇmin
- i
- i
  - adjectival nouns — kaḷvi
  - adverbial participle — vīci, kalavi, cīi, poṇi, paraii
  - adverbs — naṇi, iṇi
  - imperative/optative — vāli, ūkki, kātti, pōṇṇuti
  - negative adverbial participle — ili, aṇṇi, iṇṇi
  - negative imperative/optative — varuntāti
  - non-past participial nouns — aṭuvi, uṇaivi, cāntāṇṇi
  - non-past personal verbs — iratti, aṇcuti, pōkuti, cēṇi
  - (nominal + il)
    - negative al and il — nāṇ ili
- vi
  - verbal nouns — vēḷvi
- ika
- ika
  - imperative/optative — ceṇṇika
- ikam
- ikam
  - imperative/optative — āṇṇikam
- ikā
- ikā
  - imperative/optative — kāṇikā, kāṇṇikā
- ikum
- ikum
  - past personal verbs — kēṇṇikum
- ikai
- (k)kai
  - verbal nouns — uṇṇikai, kārikai, cārikai
- icin
- icin
  - imperative/optative — āṇṇicin, vaṇṇitticin

- past personal verbs — maṛanticiṇ, āṇṛiciṇ, pōṇṛiciṇ  
**-iciṇōr**  
**-ōr**
- past participial nouns — iṛanticiṇōr, paṭaitticiṇōr  
**-iciṇōl**  
**-ōl**
- past participial nouns — pirinticiṇōl  
**-iciṇōṇ**  
**-ōṇ**
- past personal verbs — ceṇṛiciṇōṇ  
**-iṭam/iṭan**  
**-iṭam/iṭan**
- case markers and postpositions — kākkum iṭam, pulampiya  
iṭan
- iṭai**  
**-iṭai**
- case markers and postpositions — kaṭattiṭai, kōṭṭiṭai, kaiyiṭai,  
ūriṭai
- ittai**  
**-ittai**
- imperative/optative — pāṭittiai
- itu**  
**-tu**
- adjectival nouns — vālitu, putitu
- iya**  
**-a**
- adjectival nouns — iṇiya, tamiya  
 infinitive — coliya  
 past adjectival participle — pōkiya, cērttiya, valliya, iṛiya  
 past participial nouns — vēṇṭiya  
 past personal verbs — vaḷiya, nīṇkiya
- iya**  
 imperative/optative — vāliya
- (i)iya**  
 infinitive — tāṇkiya, uṇartiya, kuṭikkiya, veḷiya

*-iyatu*

**-atu**

past participial nouns — uḷḷiyatu

*-iyar*

**-ar**

adjectival nouns — nutaliyar, nōṇpiyar  
past participial nouns — valliyyar

**-iyar(ō)**

imperative/optative — ākiyar, varutiyar  
negative imperative/optative — iliyar

**-(ī)iyar**

infinitive — pēṇiyar, kaṭṭiyar

**(ī)iyar(ō)**

imperative/optative — uṇṇiyar

*-iyarō*

**-iyar(ō)**

imperative/optative — ākiyarō, niliyarō  
negative imperative/optative — tavāaliyarō, kāṇiliyarō

**-(ī)iyar(ō)**

imperative/optative — celḷiyarō

*-iyāy*

**-āy**

past participial nouns — karutiyāy

*-iyāṇ*

**-āṇ**

past participial nouns — kaṭṭiyāṇ

*-iyōy*

**-ōy**

past participial nouns — kūṭiyōy  
past personal verbs — pularttiyōy, vantōy

*-iyōṇ*

**-ōṇ**

past participial nouns — tappiyōṇ  
past personal verbs — nalkiyōṇ

*-ir***-avir**

adjectival nouns — ūravir

past participial nouns — cāṇravir, kaṇṭavir

**-ir**

adjectival nouns — māntir, kiḷavir, nakāalir

negative personal verbs — kaḷaḷalir

non-past personal verbs — ucātir, aṭitir, eṇṇutir, iraṇkuvir

past participial nouns — tuṇintaṇir

past personal verbs — koṇṭir, ottaṇir, uḷḷiṇir

**-ī(i)r**

past participial nouns — vilaṇkiyīr

*-il***-il**

case markers and postpositions — arukil

conditional — kaḷikkil

comparison — pitirvil poṇki

(nominal + il)

negative al and il — nukarcci il

*-illatu*

(nominal + il)

negative al and il — illatu nōkki

*-illavaṇ*

(nominal + il)

negative al and il — aṇṇ illavaṇ

*-illā***-ā**

negative adjectival participle — nilai illā p poruḷ

*-illāṇ*

(nominal + il)

negative al and il — nayaṇ illāṇ

*-illēṇ*

(nominal + il)

negative al and il — maruntu yātum illēṇ

- illai**  
(nominal + il)  
negative al and il — oṇru illai
- illōr**  
(nominal + il)  
negative al and il — uṇarcci illōr
- ila**  
(nominal + il)  
negative al and il — ētu ila
- ilatu**  
(nominal + il)  
negative al and il — tīrvu ilatu āka
- ilam**  
(nominal + il)  
negative al and il — pāramum ilam, ceytanrō ilam
- ilar**  
(nominal + il)  
negative al and il — aruḷ ilar
- ilavaṇ**  
(nominal + il)  
negative al and il — aṇpu ilavaṇ
- ilaḷ**  
**-aḷ**  
negative personal verbs — melintilaḷ  
(nominal + il)  
negative al and il — vaḷu ilaḷ
- ilaṇ**  
(nominal + il)  
negative al and il — viṇai ilaṇ, valliṇṇum ilaṇ, maruṇku ilaṇ
- ilār**  
**-ār**  
negative participial nouns — āyvantilār  
(nominal + il)  
negative al and il — neṇc(u) ilār, uṇarv(u) ilār



*-ilālar*

(nominal + **il**)

negative al and il — *tāl ilālar*

*-ilālan*

(nominal + **il**)

negative al and il — *aṛaṇ ilālan*

*-ilān*

(nominal + **il**)

negative al and il — *tīt(u) ilān, tāl ilān*

*-ili*

**-i**

negative adverbial participle — *uppu ili ventatai*

(nominal + **il**)

negative al and il — *nāṇ ili*

*-iliyarō*

**-iyar(ō)**

negative imperative/optative — *kāṇiliyarō*

(nominal + **il**)

negative al and il — *paṛṛal iliyarō*

*-ilir*

(nominal + **il**)

negative al and il — *aṇṇ(u) ilir*

*-ilīyar*

(nominal + **il**)

negative al and il — *mācu ilīyar*

*-ilīr*

(nominal + **il**)

negative al and il — *tavaṛ(u) ilīr*

*-ilēm*

(nominal + **il**)

negative al and il — *tuṇai ilēm*

*-ilēṇ*

**-ēṇ**

negative personal verbs— *ilāntilēṇ*

(nominal + il)

negative al and il — tītu ilēn, niṛṛal ilēn

**-ilai**

**-ai**

negative personal verbs — niṇaittilai

(nominal + il)

negative al and il — aruḷ ilai, tavar(u) ilai

**-ilōr**

(nominal + il)

negative al and il — tīraṇ ilōr

**-ilōḷ**

(nominal + il)

negative al and il — māc(u) ilōḷ

**-irru**

**-tu**

adjectival nouns — puṛaviṛru

past personal verbs — uṭkiṛru, tāyiṛru

**-iṇ**

**-icin**

imperative/optative — āṛriciṇ, vaṭitticiṇ

past personal verbs — maṛanticiṇ, āṇriciṇ, pōṇriciṇ

**-iṇ**

adverbs — nuṇṇitiṇ, nallitiṇ, vāḷitiṇ, eḷitiṇ, uritiṇ

case markers and postpositions — varaippiṇ ippolil, maṛaiyiṇ

causal — katuvaliṇ, ākaliṇ, āṭaliṇ, orāliṇ, terutaliṇ, vaḷamaiyiṇ,

iṇmaiṇ, kāṇāmaiṇ, vārāmaiṇ

conditional — variṇ, tuṇciṇ, kāṇiṇ, pōkiṇ, iruppiṇ, kēṭkiṇ, kēṭpiṇ

comparison — urumiṇ uraṛupu cilaippa, itaṇiṇ koṭiyatu

**-iṇm**

**-m**

negative personal verbs — puṇarvu iṇm

(nominal + il)

negative al and il — puṇarvu iṇm

**-iṇmai****-mai**

negative verbal nouns — pāyal iṇmai, aḷi iṇmai

**-iṇri****-i**

negative adverbial participle — kavalpu iṇri

**-iṇru****-u**negative adverbial participle — iṇru  
(nominal + il)

negative al and il — koṭiyōr iṇru, uyvu iṇru

**-tu**

adjectival nouns — veṇkuṇṇuṇṇu

past personal verbs — curuṇṇuṇṇu

**-iṇa****-a**

adjectival nouns — eruttiṇa

past adjectival participle — āyiṇa, tuvariṇa

past personal verbs — paḷuniṇa

past participial nouns — orṭiyiṇa pōla, cūṭiṇa ... muttam

**-iṇatu****-atu**

adjectival nouns — kuḷampinatu

case markers and postpositions — nōṇpinatu aḷavu

**-iṇam****-am**

past personal verbs — vēṇṭiṇam

**-iṇar****-ar**

adjectival nouns — kāṭiṇar, nūṇṇiṇar

past participial nouns — vēṇṭiṇar

past personal verbs — kūṇiṇar

**-iṇavar****-avar**

adjectival nouns — puṇarppinavar

**-iṇavai****-avai**

adjectival nouns — ampiṇavai  
 past personal verbs — ētiṇavai

**-iṇaḷ****-aḷ**

adjectival nouns — cumaṭṭiṇaḷ  
 past personal verbs — toṭaṅkiṇaḷ, tuṭaiyiṇaḷ, viṇaviṇaḷ, taḷīyiṇaḷ

**-iṇan****-an**

adjectival nouns — kaḷaliṇan, kacciṇan  
 past participial nouns — aṇciṇan ātal  
 past personal verbs — tāṅkiṇan, taḷīyiṇan

**-iṇāy****-āy**

adjectival nouns — katuppiṇāy  
 past personal verbs — pārāṭṭiṇāy

**-iṇār****-ār**

adjectival nouns — neṇciṇār  
 past participial nouns — oṇriṇār vālkkai  
 past personal verbs — ūṭiṇār

**-iṇāl****-āl**

case markers and postpositions — talaiyiṇāl

**-iṇāḷ****-āḷ**

adjectival nouns — katuppiṇāl  
 past participial nouns — iṇrāl  
 past personal verbs — pōyiṇāl

**-iṇān****-ān**

adjectival nouns — muraciṇān  
 past participial nouns — uṇṭiyiṇān  
 past personal verbs — vikkiṇān

**-iṇir****-ir**

past personal verbs — uḷḷiṇir

**-iṇiṇ****-iṇ**

adverbs — uritiṇiṇ

case markers and postpositions — maṇaiyiṇiṇ

comparison — kuṇṇiṇiṇ

**-iṇum****-um**

comparison — kūṭiṇum, nammiṇum, nummiṇum

concessive of fact — āyiṇum, colluṇum, aḷippiṇum

concessive of supposition — ākiṇum, āyiṇum, ūṭiṇum, kaḷiyiṇum, vēṇṭiṇum, peyariṇum

**-iṇem****-em**

past personal verbs — curukkiṇem

**-iṇeṇ****-eṇ**

adjectival nouns — katuppiṇeṇ

past personal verbs — nōkkiṇeṇ

**-iṇēm****-ēm**

adjectival nouns — neṇciṇēm

past personal verbs — oṇṇiṇēm

**-iṇēṇ****-ēṇ**

adjectival nouns — aṇiviṇēṇ

past personal verbs — uḷḷiṇēṇ

**-iṇai****-ai**

adjectival nouns — maintiṇai

past personal verbs — niṇaiyiṇai, colluṇai

<i>-iṇōy</i>	
<i>-ōy</i>	adjectival nouns — marapiṇōy
<i>-iṇōr</i>	
<i>-ōr</i>	past participial nouns — nīṭiṇōr
<i>-iṇōṇ</i>	
<i>-ōṇ</i>	adjectival nouns — muṇpiṇōṇ
<i>-ī</i>	
<i>-ī</i>	imperative/optative — vanti
	non-past personal verbs — uḷartī
<i>-īi</i>	
<i>-i</i>	adverbial participle — cīi, porīi
<i>-īiya</i>	
<i>-(ī)iya</i>	infinitive — velīiya
<i>-īiyar</i>	
<i>-(ī)iyar</i>	infinitive — kaṭīiyar
<i>-(ī)iyar(ō)</i>	imperative/optative — uṇīiyar, celīiyar
<i>-īiyarō</i>	
<i>-(ī)iyar(ō)</i>	imperative/optative — celīiyarō
<i>-īiyāṇ</i>	
<i>-āṇ</i>	past participial nouns — kaṭīiyāṇ
<i>-īiyiṇāṇ</i>	
<i>-āṇ</i>	past participial nouns — uṇīiyiṇāṇ

- īr*  
     -*ī(i)r*  
         past participial nouns — *vilāṅkiyīr*
- īka*  
     -*īka*  
         imperative/optative — *ceṇṇika*
- īkam*  
     -*īkam*  
         imperative/optative — *ayarntīkam*
- īttai*  
     -*īttai*  
         imperative/optative — *niṇṇīttai*
- īm*  
     -*īm*  
         negative imperative/optative — *cellātīm*
- īmin*  
     -*īmin*  
         imperative/optative — *kēṭṭimin*
- īmē*  
     -*īmē*  
         negative imperative/optative — *ceppātīmē*
- īmō*  
     -*īmō*  
         imperative/optative — *ceyṭīmō*  
         negative imperative/optative — *aḷātīmō*
- īyar*  
     -*īyar*  
         negative imperative/optative — *mācu ilīyar*
- īr*  
     -*īr*  
         adjectival nouns — *ūrīr*  
         negative imperative/optative — *toḷukallīr*  
         negative participial nouns — *aṇiyātīr pōla*  
         negative personal verbs — *āṇīr*  
         non-past personal verbs — *maruḷtīr, eṇṇīr, viṇavuvīr*

past personal verbs — ceytīr, kāñīr(ō)  
 non-past participial nouns — varuvīr

**-ī(i)r**

past participial nouns — palcāñīr

**-u**

**-ā(a)tu**

negative adverbial participle — kuṛāatu, āñātu, aṛiyātu,  
 niṛukkallātu, ivarkallātu

**-u**

adverbial participle — porutu, peytu, kāttu, ventu, vēṭṭu, koṇṭu,  
 kaṛṛu, āṇṛu

imperative/optative — iyaikku

negative adverbial participle — iṇṛu

non-past personal verbs — teḷikku, nukarku

verbal nouns — kuḷūu

**-(p)pu**

verbal nouns — maṛappu

**-pu (p+u)**

infinitive — ninaipu

**-vu**

verbal nouns — kaḷaivu

**-ukku**

**-k(k)(u), akk(u), ukku**

case markers and postpositions — peyavukku, matiṇṇukku

**-uka**

**-(k)ka**

imperative/optative — ākuka, keṭuka, varuka

**-ukam**

**-am**

non-past personal verbs — cēṛukam

**uṭaṇ**

**-uṭaṇ**

case markers and postpositions — aintu uṭaṇ pōṛṛi, kāṭuṭaṇ,  
 kiḷaiyuṭaṇ, avar uṭaṇ nērvarkol



**-uṭai(ya)**

**-uṭai(ya)**

case markers and postpositions — muttu uṭai maruppiṇ, ninṇuṭai  
vāḷkkai, cīr uṭaiya ilai

**-untu**

**-untu**

non-past personal verbs — vaḷaṅkuntu

**-una**

**-a**

non-past participial nouns — taṭukkuna, niṛaikkuna, vittuna,  
paṇṇuna

**-unar**

**-ar**

non-past participial nouns — pāṭunar, īkunar, kāṇunar

**-unaḷ**

**-aḷ**

non-past participial nouns — maṇṇunaḷ, niṇaiyunaḷ

**-unaṇ**

**-aṇ**

non-past participial nouns — kāmuṇaṇ

**-unai**

**-ai**

non-past participial nouns — koḷḷunai

**-um**

**-āṇum**

concessive of fact — illāṇum

concessive of supposition — eṇṇāṇum

**-ikum**

past personal verbs — kēṭṭikum

**-iṇum**

concessive of fact — collīṇum, alippīṇum

concessive of supposition — ākīṇum, kaḷiyīṇum, vēṇṭīṇum,  
peyaṛīṇum

**-um**

adverbs — naṇṇum, peritum

case markers and postpositions — **maḱaḱirullum**, **ellāruḱḱum**  
 comparison — **kūṭiṇum**, **nammiṇum**,  
 concessive of fact — **kaṇṭum**, **aṇṇiyum**, **āyiṇum**, **kalavavum**,  
**varavum**, **ākavum**  
 concessive of supposition — **āyiṇum**, **ūṭiṇum**, **eṇṇālum**  
 non-past adjectival participle — **piṇikkum**, **niṇaikkum**, **kaṭkum**,  
**eṭuppum**, **tarūum**, **niṇaiyum**  
 non-past personal verbs — **kāṇkum**, **piritum**, **cellum**, **varūum**,  
**irakkum**, **niṛkum**, **tēmpum**, **tiriyum**, **viyakkum**, **amaikum**,  
**eṭuppum**, **ceṇṇum**, **cērum**, **pōlum**  
 particles — **moḱitalum**, **naṇṇum**

**ellā \_ um**

collectives and universals — **ellā maṇaiyum**, **ellā uyirkkum**

**ellār \_ um**

collectives and universals — **ellārkkum**, **ellar puṇaṇum**, **ellār**  
**maṇaiyum**, **ellāruḱḱum**

**-m**

imperative/optative — **ōm**, **uṇm**, **tam**, **vārum**

**yā \_ um**

collectives and universals — **yāṅkum**, **yāṅkaṇum**, **yāṇṭōrum**,  
**yātum**, **yātonṇum**, **yārkkāṇum**, **yāraiylum**, **yāvatum**,  
**yāvarum**, **yāvīrum**, **yāvīrāyiyum**, **yāvaiyum**

**umpar**

**-umpar**

case markers and postpositions — **vēṇkaṭattu umpar**

**uḷi**

**-uḷi**

case markers and postpositions — **ceṇṇuḷi**, **celvuḷi**, **kēṭpuḷi**

**uḷai**

**-uḷai**

case markers and postpositions — **avaṇuḷai**

**uḷ**

**-uḷ**

case markers and postpositions — **kaḷiṅkattuḷ**, **uḷḷuḷ**  
 verbal nouns — **viḷaiyuḷ**

*uḷḷum***-uḷḷum**

case markers and postpositions — makalirullum, ellārullum  
 comparison — makalirullum

*uḷḷē***-uḷḷē**

case markers and postpositions — uḷḷē kaṇalum uḷḷam

*uḷa***-a**

non-past personal verbs — veriyum uḷa

*-uḷi***-uḷi**

case markers and postpositions — muṛaiyuḷi, marapuḷi

*-uḷē***-u(ḷ)ḷē**

case markers and postpositions — nīruḷē

*-ūu***-u**

verbal nouns — kuḷūu

**-(ū)u**

imperative/optative — orūu

infinitive — kāṇūu, piliyūu

non-past adjectival participle — etirkoḷūu nālam

*-ūu niṇra***-ūu**

non-past adjectival participle — aṭūu niṇra yākkai

*-ūum***-um**

non-past adjectival participle — tarūum, varūum

non-past personal verbs — varūum, toḷūum, porūum, neritarūum  
 puṇal

particles — iṇṇatūum

*ūṇkaṇ***-ūṇkan**

case markers and postpositions — uyar varaikku ūṇkaṇ

- ūñku*  
**-ūñku**  
 case markers and postpositions — paravā ūñku, inñiñ ūñkum
- ūṭu*  
**-ūṭu**  
 case markers and postpositions — tukil ūṭu
- ūḷ*  
**-ūḷ**  
 case markers and postpositions — pal ūḷ
- e \_\_\_\_ um*  
**e \_\_\_\_ um**  
 collectives and universals — ellāmum, e-v-vakai-c-ceytiyum
- etir(ē)*  
**-etir(ē)**  
 case markers and postpositions — kai etirē, ataṇ etirē
- em*  
**-em**  
 past personal verbs — inpurraṇem, curukkiṇem  
 non-past personal verbs — kāṇkuvem
- ellā*  
**ellā \_\_ m**  
 collectives and universals — ellā maṇaiyum, ellā uyirkkum
- ellām*  
**-ellām**  
 collectives and universals — pulavar ellām, vaḷakkam ellāmum
- ellār*  
**ellār \_\_ um**  
 collectives and universals — ellārkkum, ellār puṇaṇum, ellār māṇum, ellārullum
- ellārum*  
**ellārum**  
 collectives and universals — ellārum aṇiya
- ellīrum*  
**ellīrum**  
 collectives and universals — ellīrum eṇ ceytīr

*-ellai*

**-ellai**

case markers and postpositions — *nerunal ellai, nāyirru ellai, naṇṇāl talaivarum ellai*

*ellōrkkum*

**ellōr \_\_ um**

collectives and universals — *ellōrkkum koṭumati*

*-eṇ*

**-eṇ**

adjectival nouns — *paricilen*

imitative words — *iḷum-eṇ (cummai)*

negative personal verbs — *vēṇtaleṇ*

non-past participial nouns — *kūruveṇ pōla, viraivaṇeṇ*

non-past personal verbs — *uḷeṇ, peyarkkuveṇ, maṛaikuveṇ, maṛappen(ō), kāṇpeṇ, taṇṭuveṇ*

past participial nouns — *takaittaṇeṇ allal*

past personal verbs — *toṭutteṇ, vantaṇeṇ, nōkkinēṇ*

*eṇra*

imitative words — *pullenra*

*eṇrāl*

**-āl**

conditional — *aṛikuvatu eṇrāl*

*eṇrālum*

**-um**

concessive of supposition — *eṇrālum*

*eṇrum*

**eṇrum**

collectives and universals — *eṇrum cellēṇ*

*-eṇṇa*

**-eṇṇa**

comparison — *mati eṇṇa*

*eṇṇatūum*

**eṇṇatūum**

collectives and universals — *aruvippāṭum eṇṇatūum*

*eṇṇalum*

**enṇalum**

collectives and universals — enṇalum pariyalō ilam

*e ṇ(ṇ)ai \_\_ um*

**en(ṇ)ai \_\_ um**

collectives and universals — enṇai nī ceyyiṇum, eṇai p pakaiyum

*-eṇa*

**-e(ṇ)ṇa**

adverbs — melleṇa, terreṇa

comparison — kaṇ eṇa

imitative words — iḷum eṇa

particles — oṇṇu eṇa ... toṇṇu eṇa

*eṇaitt \_\_ um*

**eṇaitt \_\_ um**

collectives and universals — eṇaittāṇum, eṇaittu oṇṇum

*eṇaittum*

**eṇaittum**

collectives and universals — eṇaittum koṭumai

*-ē*

**-ē**

case markers and postpositions — nilaiyē, talaīyē, kaṭuñciṇavēntē, piṇakkē, neñcē (vocative)

imperative/optative — vāvē

interrogative — nallaṇ aṇṇē

negative adverbial participle — cūlātē

particles — kaṇṭikumē, aritē

**-mē**

imperative/optative — ceṇmē

*-ēem*

**-ē(e)m**

negative personal verbs — poypa viṭēem

*-ēeṇ*

**-eṇ**

negative personal verbs — viṭēeṇ

**-ēl****-ēl**

conditional — eṇṇīrēl, uṇṭēl, viṭuvāyēl  
 negative conditional — aṇṇēl, kāṭṭāyēl  
 negative imperative/optative — ālēl  
 negative personal verbs — vārēl

**-ēm****-ēm**

adjectival nouns — pācaṇaiyēm, neñciṇēm  
 non-past participial nouns — kaṇṇoṭu celvēṃ  
 non-past personal verbs — nukarkēm, aṇivippēm, kaṭikuvēm,  
 poruvēm, nōvēṃ(ō)  
 past participial nouns — aḷi peṇṇēm emmai  
 past personal verbs — vēṭṭēm, oṇṇiṇēm, uraittēm

**-ē(e)m**

negative personal verbs — kūṇēm, uḷḷēm, viṭēm

**-ērka****-ka**

negative imperative/optative — cērēṇka

**-ēṇ****-ēṇ**

adjectival nouns — uṇṭiyēṇ, aṇivīṇēṇ  
 negative participial nouns — tuñcātēṇ  
 negative personal verbs — vārēṇ, cellēṇ, māṭṭēṇ, aṇiyēṇ,  
 maṇavalēṇ, uḷḷalēṇ, poṇukkallēṇ, aṇikalēṇ, amaikallēṇ, iḷantilēṇ  
 non-past participial nouns — toṭuppēṇ pōla, kāṇpēṇ, taruvēṇ  
 non-past personal verbs — uḷḷēṇ, āṇṇukēṇ, iṇukkuvēṇ, aṇikuvēṇ,  
 uvappēṇ, kāṇpēṇ, aṇivēṇ, maruḷvēṇ  
 past participial nouns — iṇṇrēṇ, niṇṇrēṇ, takaittaṇēṇ  
 past personal verbs — eṭuttēṇ, vantaṇēṇ, tōṇṇiyēṇ, takaittaṇēṇ,  
 uḷḷiṇēṇ

**-ai****-ai**

adjectival nouns — tāyai, tērai, uḷḷattai, notumalālāṇai, maintiṇai  
 adverbs — vallai

case markers and postpositions — *turaivaṇai*, *vēḷattai*  
 imperative/optative — *kāṇtai*, *vantai*, *pāṭittai*, *niṇṇittai*  
 negative imperative/optative — *poruntalai*  
 negative personal verbs — *kāṇalai*, *oḷukalai*, *niṇaittilai*  
 non-past participial nouns — *veyyai*, *vallai*, *koḷḷunai*  
 non-past personal verbs — *ceyukuvai*, *puṇarkuvai*, *āvai*, *eṇcuvai*,  
*kataḷvai*  
 past participial nouns — *aṭṭavai*  
 past personal verbs — *ṭṭaṇai*, *niṇaiyiṇai*  
 verbal nouns — *naṭai*, *kavitai*, *muṭantai*, *varuvatai*, *nekiḷntatai*,  
*aṭṭipattutatai*

**-atai**

adjectival nouns — *kaiyatai*  
 past participial nouns — *ūrntatai*, *vantatai*, *tāḷttatai*

**-avai**

adjectival nouns — *nēmiyavai*, *kālavai*, *ampiṇavai*  
 non-past participial nouns — *uṭuppavai*, *urukupavai*  
 past participial nouns — *aṭṭavai*, *ciṭariyavai*  
 past personal verbs — *ēntiṇavai*

**-(k)kai**

verbal nouns — *uṇṭikai*, *kārikai*, *cārikai*, *tīrkai*, *irukkai*

**-vai**

verbal nouns — *vēyvai*

**-aikka****-aikka**

imperative/optative — *ceṇṇaikka*

**-aikā****-aikā**

imperative/optative — *kaṇṭaikā*

**-aippāy****-aippāy**

imperative/optative — *kāṇṭaippāy*



-oṭu

-oṭu, ōṭu

case markers and postpositions — peyaroṭu, cērppaṇoṭu,  
niṇṇoṭu

oruvarum

oruvarum

collectives and universals — oruvarum illai

oruvar \_\_ um

oruvar \_\_ um

collectives and universals — oruvarkkum poyyā

onrum

onrum

collectives and universals — pilai onrum

-ō

-ō

case markers and postpositions (vocative) — ceyyāyō

imperative/optative — pōrrō

interrogative — allaṇō, kāṇāmō, tuñcāyō, vārāyō

particles — tuyilō, uraikkō, varukō, añcāyō

(personal verb + al)

negative al and il — niṭṭuvir allirō

-mō

imperative/optative — uraimō, viyaṇkoṇmō, ceṇmō

-ōṭu

-ōṭu, ōṭu

case markers and postpositions — ivaḷōṭu, marattōṭu,  
peruntakaiyōṭu

-ōm

-ōm

non-past personal verbs — tīrkuvōm

-ōy

-ōy

adjectival nouns — kātalōy, mārpiṇōy

non-past participial nouns — amarpōy, celvōy

past participial nouns — vantōy, kūṭiyōy

past personal verbs — vantōy, pularttiyōy

-ōr

-ōr

adjectival nouns — iṇaṇōr, kātalōr, nallōr, putuvōr, nilattōr

negative participial nouns — uṇarātōr, oṇṇātōr

non-past participial nouns — arakkuvōr, ūrkuvōr, malarppōr, kāṇpōr, niṇaiyumōr, valluvōr, varaivōr

past participial nouns — iṇantōr, puṇariyōr, iṇanticiṇōr, paṭaitticiṇōr, nīṇiṇōr

past personal verbs — ceytōr, koṭuttōr

-ōrum

-ōrum

particles — maṭa mayil ōrum maṇaiyavar

-ōḷ

-ōḷ

adjectival nouns — maṇaiyōḷ

negative participial nouns — kaṭiyātōḷ

non-past participial nouns — pulampuvōḷ, iṇaivōḷ

past participial nouns — niṇrōḷ, pirinticiṇōḷ

past personal verbs — iṇaiṇciyōḷ

-ōṇ

-ōṇ

adjectival nouns — kiḷavōṇ, tammōṇ, muṇpiṇōṇ, uṭukkaiyōṇ

negative participial nouns — koḷḷātōṇ

non-past participial nouns — aṇiyumōṇ

past participial nouns — tappiyōṇ, uyarntōṇ

past personal verbs — paṭarntōṇ, nalkiyōṇ, ceṇṇriciṇōṇ

-kka

-a

infinitive — maṇakka, ēṇṇipikka

-aikka

imperative/optative — ceṇṇraikka

-(k)ka

imperative/optative — ciṇakka, ēmākka, piriyātirukka, tarikka

- kkal*
- (**k**)kal
- verbal nouns — *niṛaikkal*
- kkallā*
- ā
- negative adjectival participle — *paṛakkallā*
- kkallātavar*
- avar
- negative participial nouns — *uraikkallātavar*
- kkallātu*
- ā(**a**)tu
- negative adverbial participle — *kainniṛukkallātu*
- kkalār*
- ār
- negative personal verbs — *tīrkkalār*
- kkallāṇ*
- ā(**a**)ṇ
- negative personal verbs — *uraikkallāṇ*
- kkallēṇ*
- ēṇ
- negative personal verbs — *poṛukkallēṇ*
- kkiya*
- (**ī**)iya
- infinitive — *kuṭikkiya*
- kkil*
- il
- conditional — *kaḷikkil*
- kku*
- u
- non-past personal verbs — *teḷikku*
- k(k)(u)**, **akk(u)**, **ukk(u)**
- case markers and postpositions — *niṇakku*, *emakku*,  
*mutumaikku*, *peyarvukku*, *matiyiṇukku*
- kku**
- imperative/optative — *piṛakku*

	verbal nouns — cerukku
<b>-kkuna</b>	
<b>-a</b>	non-past participial nouns — taṭukkuna, niṇaikkuna pōla
<b>-kkunar</b>	
<b>-ar</b>	non-past participial nouns — malarkkunar
<b>-kkum</b>	
<b>-um</b>	non-past adjectival participle — piṇikkum, niṇaikkum kālai non-past personal verbs — irakkum, viyakkum
<b>-kkuvatu</b>	
<b>-atu</b>	non-past participial nouns — poykkuvatu
<b>-kkuvaḷ</b>	
<b>-aḷ</b>	non-past personal verbs — uvakkuvaḷ (personal verb + al) negative al and il — pulakkuvaḷ allaḷ
<b>-kkuvaṇ</b>	
<b>-aṇ</b>	non-past personal verbs — akaḷkkuvaṇ (personal verb + al) negative al and il — tuṇakkuvaṇ allan
<b>-kkuveṇ</b>	
<b>-eṇ</b>	non-past personal verbs — peyarkkuveṇ
<b>-kkuvēm</b>	
<b>-ēm</b>	non-past personal verbs — tīrkkuvēṇ
<b>-kkuvēṇ</b>	
<b>-ēṇ</b>	non-past personal verbs — irukkuvēṇ

- kkuvōm*  
     -**ōm**  
         non-past personal verbs — *tīrkkuvōm*
- kkēm*  
     -**ē(e)m**  
         non-past personal verbs — *pulakkēm*
- kkai*  
     -**(k)kai**  
         verbal nouns — *irukkai, kākkai*
- kkō*  
     -**ō**  
         particles — *uraikkō*
- ka*  
     -**a**  
         infinitive — *niṛka*
- ā(ka)**  
         adverbs — *iṇitāka, nakaiyāka*
- ika**  
         imperative/optative — *ceṇṇika*
- īka**  
         imperative/optative — *ceṇṇīka*
- (k)ka**  
         imperative/optative — *keṭuka, ākuka, varuka*
- ka**  
         negative imperative/optative — *vāraṛka, maṛāaṛka, cērēṛka*
- kaṭai*  
     -**kaṭai**  
         case markers and postpositions — *puṛam kaṭai, ilam kaṭai, āṭum kaṭai, vanta-k-kaṭai, mēvā-k-kaṭai*
- kaṇ*  
     -**kaṇ**  
         case markers and postpositions — *taṇ kaṇ, eruttiṇ kaṇ, toṭaṇkaṛkaṇ, aṭaittakkaṇṇum*

- kam**
- am**  
non-past personal verbs — cēṛukam, kāṅkam
- ikam**  
imperative/optative — āṇṛikam
- īkam**  
imperative/optative — ayaṛntīkam
- kamā**
- kamā**  
imperative/optative — maṇṇukamā, polikamā
- kal**
- al**  
verbal nouns — maṛukal
- kallā**
- ā(a)**  
negative adjectival participle — nuḷaikallā
- kallāta**
- āta**  
negative adjectival participle — kaḷikallāta
- kallātu**
- ātu**  
negative personal verbs — amaikallātu
- ā(a)tu**  
negative adverbial participle — ivarkallātu
- kallāy**
- āy**  
negative personal verbs — tarukallāy  
negative participial nouns — aṛikallāy pōṛi
- kallār**
- ār**  
negative personal verbs — amaikallār
- kallāl**
- āl**  
negative personal verbs — uṇarkallāl

<i>-kallīr</i>	
<i>-īr</i>	negative imperative/optative — toḷukallīr
<i>-kallēṇ</i>	
<i>-ēṇ</i>	negative personal verbs — amaikallēṇ
<i>-kalam</i>	
<i>-am</i>	negative personal verbs — toṭukalam
<i>-kalan</i>	
<i>-an</i>	negative personal verbs — amaikalan
<i>-kalēṇ</i>	
<i>-ēṇ</i>	negative personal verbs — aṛikalēṇ
<i>-kalai</i>	
<i>-ai</i>	negative personal verbs — oḷukalai
<i>-kaḷ</i>	
<i>-ārkaḷ</i>	non-past participial nouns — vāl̥vārkaḷ
<i>-kaḷ</i>	singular and plural — iyaṅkaḷ
<i>-kā</i>	
<i>-ā</i>	negative adjectival participle — pōkā
<i>-ikā</i>	imperative/optative — kāṇikā, kāṇṭikā
<i>-aikā</i>	imperative/optative — kaṇṭaikā
<i>kāṇ</i>	
<i>-kāṇ</i>	particles — aritu kāṇ, koṭiyai kāṇ

*kāl***-kāl(ai)**case markers and postpositions — *oru kāl, paṭunkāl, kaṭantakkāl, ciṟappuṇākkāl**kālai***-kāl(ai)**case markers and postpositions — *uyirtta kālai**-kārum***-kārum**case markers and postpositions — *ēl kārūm**-kāṇ***-ā(a)ṇ**negative personal verbs — *pōkāṇ**-kil***kil**The Compound Stem — *aṟikilēṇ**-kiṇ***-iṇ**conditional — *kēṭkiṇ**kīl***-kīl**case markers and postpositions — *kuḷakkīl, manṇavaṇ kīl**-ku***-u**non-past personal verbs — *nukarku***-k(k)(u), akk(u), ukk(u)**case markers and postpositions — *mākkaṭku, vālvārkaṭku, nāṭaṭku, cērppaṭku***-ku**adverbs — *naṇku*comparison — *vāliyōṟku avan ilaiyan*imperative/optative — *āku**-kuti***-i**non-past personal verbs — *pōkuti*



- kutum*
  - um non-past personal verbs — ākutum
- kunar*
  - ar non-past participial nouns — īkunar, kēṭkunar
- kunaḷ*
  - aḷ non-past participial nouns — perukunaḷ
- kum*
  - ikum past personal verbs — kēṭṭikum
  - um non-past adjectival participle — kaṭkum  
non-past personal verbs — kāṇkum, niṛkum, amaikum
- kurai*
  - kurai particles — arum kuraiyai, kaṭum kurai
- kuva*
  - a non-past personal verbs — paṭukuva
- kuvatu*
  - atu non-past personal verbs — citaikuvatu
- kuvam*
  - am non-past personal verbs — kāṇkuvam, peṭkuvam
- kuvar*
  - ar non-past personal verbs — perukuvar
- kuval*
  - al non-past personal verbs — kāṇkuval

- kuva!**  
**-a!** non-past participial noun — celkuva!
- kuvāy**  
**-āy** non-past personal verbs — pōkuvāy
- kuvāṇ**  
**-āṇ** non-past personal verbs — amaikuvāṇ
- kuvem**  
**-em** non-past personal verbs — kāṇkuvem
- kuvēm**  
**-ēm** non-past personal verbs — kaṭikuvēm
- kuvēṇ**  
**-ēṇ** non-past personal verbs — aṛikuvēṇ
- kuvai**  
**-ai** non-past personal verbs — ceykuvai, puṇarkuvai
- kuvōr**  
**-ōr** non-past participial nouns — ūrkuvōr
- kēṇ**  
**-ēṇ** non-past personal verbs — āṛṛukēṇ
- kai**  
**-(k)kai** verbal nouns — tīrkai, uṇṭikai, kārikai, cārikai
- koṇṭu**  
**-koṇṭu** case markers and postpositions — nuṇkōl koṇṭu, ataṛkoṇṭu, itaṛkoṇṭu

- kol(lō)*  
**-kol(lō)**  
 particles — yārkol, pōyiṇṇu kollō
- kon(ṇu)*  
**-kon(ṇu)**  
 particles — koṇṇu nampum, koṇṇonṇu
- kō*  
**-ō**  
 particles — varukō, nōkō
- cci*  
**-(c)ci**  
 verbal nouns — cūlcci
- ccu*  
**-ccu**  
 verbal nouns — vaḷaiccu
- cār*  
**-cār**  
 case markers and postpositions — kāṭṭuccār
- ci*  
**-ci**  
 verbal nouns — kāṭci
- ciṛai*  
**-ciṛai**  
 case markers and postpositions — oru ciṛai
- ñar*  
**-ar**  
 adjectival nouns — valaiñar  
 non-past participial nouns — eṛiñar
- ñāṇkar*  
**-ñāṇkar**  
 case markers and postpositions — neṭuṇkōṭṭu ñāṇkar, vayal  
 koṇṭa ñāṇkar, pularā ñāṇkar

**-ñāṇru****-ñāṇru**

case markers and postpositions — vīlaṅku ñāṇru, piṇanta ñāṇru,  
oru ñāṇru

**-ñāṇrai****-ñāṇrai**

case markers and postpositions — vanta ñāṇrai

**-ttatu****-atu**

past participial nouns — yāttatu

**-ttatai****-ai**

past participial nouns — aṭippaṭuttatai

past personal verbs — uṭaittatai ... vaiyai, tāḷttatai, uraittatai

verbal nouns — citaittatai

**-ttal****-(t)tal**

imperative/optative — tiṛattal

verbal nouns — irattal

**-tti****-i**

imperative/optative — kātti

non-past personal verbs — iratti

**-ttu****-(t)tu**

adjectival nouns — putuvōrttu

past participial nouns — vaittu

**-ttai****-ai**

adjectival nouns — uḷḷattai

**-ittai**

imperative/optative — pāṭittai

**-īttai**

imperative/optative — niṇṇittai

**-ta****-a**

infinitive — pukuta

past adjectival participle — uḷuta nōṇ pakatu

**-tatai****-ai**

verbal nouns — ūmtatai, nekiḷntatai

**tam****-tam**

case markers and postpositions — puraiyōrtam uḷ nīr

**-tal****-(t)tal**

imperative/optative — viṭtal

verbal nouns — aṛital

**talai****-talai**case markers and postpositions — marantalai, ataṇtalai, kaṇavin  
talai, eṇ talai**taṇ****-taṇ**

case markers and postpositions — ivaṇ taṇ kai

**tāṇ****-tāṇ**

particles — atu tāṇ, takaiyōtāṇ

pronouns — tāṇ

**-ti****-āti**

negative imperative/optative — varuntāti

**-ti**

imperative/optative — pōṛṛuti

verbal nouns — amaiti

non-past personal verbs — aṇcuti, pōkuti, cēṛi (cel + ti)

**-tiyar****-iyar(ō)**

imperative/optative — varutiyar

- tir**  
**-ir**  
 non-past personal verbs — ucātir, aṛitir, eṇṇutir
- til(la)**  
**-til(la)**  
 particles — muṭika til, maṛantaṇarō til, celvēm tilla
- tīram/tīraṇ**  
**-tīram/tīraṇ**  
 case markers and postpositions — avar tīram celvēṇ, vēṭṭōr  
 tīratu, oru tīraṇ
- tī**  
**-ī**  
 imperative/optative — vantī  
 non-past personal verbs — uḷartī
- tīm**  
**-īm**  
 negative imperative/optative — cellātīm
- tīmē**  
**-īmē**  
 negative imperative/optative — ceppātīmē
- tīmō**  
**-īmō**  
 imperative/optative — ceytīmō
- tīr**  
**-īr**  
 non-past personal verbs — maruḷtīr  
 past personal verbs — ceytīr
- tu** *Look under -atu, -aḥtu, -aṇru, -āatu, -ātu, -itu, -irru, -inru, and -untu.*
- tum**  
**-um**  
 non-past personal verbs — piritum, verūutum, varutum

*teyya*

**-teyya**

particles — taṅkiṇ evaṇḍ teyya, col iṇi t teyya, teyya ...  
nēṭiṇar cella

*teyyō*

**-teyyō**

particles — vālēm teyyō

*-tai* Also look under *-atai*.

**-ai**

imperative/optative — vantai

**-tai**

verbal nouns — kavitai, muṭantai

*-toru(m)*

**-toru(m)**

case markers and postpositions — uḷḷutoru, cimaitorūm

*-tōru(m)*

**-tōru(m)**

case markers and postpositions — vaikal tōru, nāl tōrum

*-na*

**-a**

non-past participial nouns — piraḷna, vittuna, niṛaikkuna,  
taṭukkuna

*naṭuvaṇ*

**-naṭuvaṇ**

case markers and postpositions — ceḷunakar naṭuvaṇ

*-nar*

**-ar**

non-past participial nouns — pāṭunar, uṛunar, aṛainar,  
viraivanar, malarkkunar, uḷarnar, īkunar, kāṇunar, kuyinar

*-naḷ*

**-aḷ**

non-past participial nouns — maṇṇunaḷ, niṇaiyunaḷ

*-naṇ*

**-aṇ**

non-past participial nouns — kāmuṇaṇ

*nāppaṇ*

**-nāppaṇ**

case markers and postpositions — pāṛkaṭal nāppaṇ,  
vaiyeyiṛṛavar nāppaṇ

*nāḷum*

**nāḷum**

collectives and universals — nāḷum eṇ neṇcu piṇikkonṭa

*niṇṛu(m)*

**-niṇṛu(m)**

case markers and postpositions — avaṇ niṇṛum, karai niṇṛu

*nēr*

**nēr**

comparison — poṇ nēr pacalai

*-nai*

**ai**

non-past participial nouns — koḷḷunai

*-ppa*

**-a**

infinitive — maṛappa

non-past participial nouns — varippa

non-past personal verbs — niṭṭippa, aḷippa, tuṇippa

*-ppatu*

**-atu**

non-past participial nouns. — uvappatu

non-past verbal nouns — kiḷippatu, mukiḷppatu

*-ppar*

**-ar**

non-past personal verbs — maṛappar

*-ppal*

**-al**

non-past personal verbs — uraiḷpal

*-ppavar*

**-avar**

non-past participial nouns — iruppavar



- ppavaḷ*  
     -*avaḷ*  
         non-past participial nouns — uṇarppavaḷ
- ppavan*  
     -*avan*  
         non-past participial nouns — uḷappavan
- ppavai*  
     -*avai*  
         non-past participial nouns — uṭuppavai
- ppan*  
     -*aṇ*  
         non-past personal verbs — karappan
- ppaṇa*  
     -*a*  
         non-past participial nouns — aṛuppaṇa  
         non-past personal verbs — takaippaṇa
- ppāṭu*  
     -*pāṭu*  
         verbal nouns — vaḷappāṭu, muṭṭuppāṭu
- ppām*  
     -*ām*  
         non-past personal verbs — niṛuppām
- ppāy*  
     -*āy*  
         imperative/optative — kāṇṭaippāy  
         non-past participial nouns — kaṇṇu mēyppāy pōl  
         non-past personal verbs — tuṛappāy, poyppāy
- ppār*  
     -*ār*  
         non-past participial nouns — nekiḷppār  
         non-past personal verbs — tuṛappār
- ppāl*  
     -*āl*  
         non-past participial nouns — nōy uḷappāl

- ppāṇ**  
**-āṇ**  
 non-past participial nouns — nāṇ nūlaippāṇ  
 non-past personal verbs — oḷippāṇ
- ppi-**  
**-(p)pi**  
 causative stem — pacappittōr
- ppiṇ**  
**-iṇ**  
 conditional — niṇaippiṇ, iruppiṇ
- ppiṇum**  
**-iṇum**  
 concessive of fact — aḷippiṇum
- ppu**  
**-(p)pu**  
 verbal nouns — maṇappu
- ppum**  
**-um**  
 non-past adjectival participle — eṭuppum ... mālai  
 non-past personal verbs — eṭuppum
- ppeṇ**  
**-eṇ**  
 non-past personal verbs — maṇappen(ō), niṇuppen
- ppēm**  
**-ēm**  
 non-past personal verbs — aṇivippēm
- ppēṇ**  
**-ēṇ**  
 non-past participial nouns — toṭuppēṇ  
 non-past personal verbs — uvappēṇ
- ppōy**  
**-ōy**  
 non-past participial nouns — ciṇappōy

- ppōr*  
     **-ōr**  
         non-past participial nouns — malarppōr
- pa*  
     **-a**  
         infinitive — nirpa  
         non-past participial nouns — vēṇṭupa  
         non-past personal verbs — eytupa, kaluḷpa
- pakkam*  
     **-pakkam**  
         case markers and postpositions — icai paṭu pakkam, maṇal pakkam
- paṭi*  
     **-paṭi**  
         case markers and postpositions — oṇṇiya paṭi
- patam*  
     **patam**  
         case markers and postpositions — varu patam
- paṭu-*  
     (infinitive in (kk)a + **paṭu**)  
         passive stem — eṇappaṭutal, kāmuṇappaṭutal, nīṅkappaṭiṇē,  
         kaippaṭukkappaṭṭāy, viyakkappaṭūmor
- patu*  
     **-atu**  
         non-past participial nouns — uṇpatu  
         verbal nouns — kāṇpatu
- par*  
     **-ar**  
         non-past personal verbs — kāṇpar
- pal*  
     **-al**  
         non-past personal verbs — kāṇpal
- paḷ*  
     **-aḷ**  
         non-past personal verbs — eṇpal

- pavar**  
**-avar**  
 non-past participial nouns — koḷpavar
- pavaḷ**  
**-avaḷ**  
 non-past participial nouns — nērpavaḷ
- pavaṇ**  
**-avaṇ**  
 non-past participial nouns — varaipavaṇ
- pavai**  
**-avai**  
 non-past participial nouns — urukupavai
- paṇa**  
**-a**  
 non-past participial nouns — koṭpaṇa
- pāṇkar**  
**-pāṇkar**  
 case markers and postpositions — cimaya-p-pāṇkar
- pāṭu**  
**-pāṭu**  
 case markers and postpositions — pal pāṭu  
 verbal nouns — ilampāṭu, vaḷappāṭu, muṭṭuppāṭu
- pām**  
**-ām**  
 non-past personal verbs— kāṇpām
- pāy**  
**-āy**  
 non-past personal verbs — eṇpāy
- pār**  
**ār**  
 non-past participial nouns — eṇpār(um palar)
- pāl**  
**-pāl**  
 case markers and postpositions — ciṛāarpāl

**-pāl**

**-āl**

non-past participial nouns — enpāl(ai)

**-pān**

**-ān**

non-past participial nouns — enpān

**-pān** (p + ān)

infinitive — kānpān

**-pi-**

**-(p)pi**

causative stem — ērpikkum

**piṇ(ṇ ē)**

**-iṇ**

conditional — kētpiṇ

**-piṇ**

case markers and postpositions — perukarpiṇ, avan piṇ, kuṭi  
p piṇ, muyaṅkiya piṇṇē

**piṇrai**

**-piṇrai**

case markers and postpositions — kaḷainta piṇrai, nirai-p-piṇrai

**piṇṇar**

**-piṇṇar**

case markers and postpositions — ēṇṇiṇ piṇṇar

**piṇṇum**

**-piṇṇum**

case markers and postpositions — tappiṇṇu piṇṇum

**-pīr**

**-īr**

non-past personal verbs — enpīr

**-kil**

compound verb stem — paṭarkipīr

**-pu**

**-pu** (p + u)

infinitive — niṇaipu

- (p)pu**  
verbal nouns— *piripu*
- puṭai*  
-**puṭai**  
case markers and postpositions — *kamukin puṭai*
- purai*  
-**purai**  
comparison — *vēy purai paṇaittōl*
- peṇ*  
-**eṇ**  
non-past personal verbs — *kāṇpeṇ*
- pēṇ*  
-**ēṇ**  
non-past participial nouns — *kāṇpērku* (*kāṇpēṇ* + *ku*)  
non-past personal verbs — *kāṇpēṇ*
- poḷutu*  
-**poḷutu/pōḷtu**  
case markers and postpositions — *uṇṇum poḷutu*
- pōy*  
-**ōy**  
non-past participial nouns — *amarpōy*
- pōr*  
-**ōr**  
non-past participial nouns — *kāṇpōr, irukkiṇpōr*
- pōl(a)*  
-**pōl(a)**  
comparison — *aṇal pōl teḷmaṇi, ūmaṇ pōla*
- pōḷtu*  
-**poḷutu/pōḷtu**  
case markers and postpositions — *teḷitta pōḷtē*
- m*  
-**um**  
non-past adjectival participle — *ām, avāam, ayāam, mēn tōl, pōm kuṇṇu*
- (u)m**  
imperative/optative — *ōm, uṇm, tam, vārum*

- m
  - negative personal verbs — inm
  - non-past personal verbs — canm
- ma*ti
  - mat*i*
    - imperative/optative — collumat*i*
- ma*r
  - ar
    - non-past participial nouns — kanmar
    - pronouns — patinmar
- ma*ruḷ
  - maruḷ
    - comparison — vēy maruḷ paṇaittōḷ
- ma*l
  - ā(a)mal
    - negative adverbial participle — toypaṭāmal, peṛāmal
- ma*rru(*m*)
  - marru(*m*)
    - particles — otti marru ovvāti, uḷḷaḷ kūṭātu enrōy marrum ...
- ma*n(n ē)/*ma*n(n ō)
  - man(n ē)/man(n ō)
    - particles — muḷutuman puṛaḷa, pulliyēm mannē, naṭṭaṇai mannō
- ma*nra
  - manra
    - particles — maṭavai manra, citaintatu manra
- ma*nār
  - ār
    - non-past participial nouns — enmanār
- m*ā
  - kamā
    - imperative/optative — mannukamā, polikamā
  - mā
    - particles — taṭkumā kālē, malarkamā

**-māṭṭu**

**-māṭṭu**

case markers and postpositions — nin māṭṭu, tamiyōr māṭṭu-ē

**-māṭṭai**

**-māṭṭai**

case markers and postpositions — ñāyar māṭṭai

**-māṇ**

**-māṇ**

case markers and postpositions — paṇmāṇum

**-māttiram**

**-māttiram**

case markers and postpositions — muyaṅku māttiram

**māttirai**

**-māttirai**

case markers and postpositions — kai tōyal māttirai, ceyyum māttirai, viḷitta māttirai

**-mātu/mātō**

**-mātu/mātō**

particles — niṇaival mātu avar paṇpu, kēṭkuvir mātō, ēmattai mātō

**-mār**

**-ār**

non-past participial nouns — cāaymār

**-mār**

infinitive — taṇimār

negative imperative/optative — kēḷaṇmār

negative participial nouns — kēḷaṇmār

singular and plural — tōḷimār

**-māḷa**

**-māḷa**

particles — pūṇka māḷa

**-māṇ**

**-āṇ**

adjectival nouns — perumāṇ



*māṇa*

**māṇa**

comparison — aravam māṇa

*-micai*

**-micai**

case markers and postpositions — tēr micai, kuṇṇi micai

*-miṇ*

**-īmiṇ**

imperative/optative — kēṭṭiṇ

**-miṇ**

imperative/optative — uṇmiṇ, viyaṇkoṇmiṇ

negative imperative/optative — koḷḷaṇmiṇ, naḱāṇmiṇ

*mītu*

**-mītu**

case markers and postpositions — malar mītu

*mīmikai*

**-mīmikai**

case markers and postpositions — tuṇkal mīmikai

*mutal*

**-mutal(mutal)**

case markers and postpositions — neṇi mutal, kuṇa mutal  
tōṇṇi, nēmi mutal

*muḷutum*

**-muḷutum**

collectives and universals — malai muḷutum

*muṇai*

**-muṇai**

case markers and postpositions — vaḷi muṇai, iṇu muṇai

*muṇ*

**-muṇ**

case markers and postpositions — ēṇṇiṇmuṇ, niṇ muṇ

*muṇṇar*

**-muṇṇar**

case markers and postpositions — tāy muṇṇar, ṇāyiṇṇu muṇṇar

- *mē*
  - īmē**  
negative imperative/optative — ceppātīmē
  - mē**  
imperative/optative — ceṇmē
- mēl*
  - mēl**  
case markers and postpositions — eruttam mēl, ukkattu mēlum, kunṛiṇ mēl
- mēliruntu*
  - mēliruntu**  
case markers and postpositions — ēṛṛiṇ mēliruntu
- *mai*
  - ā(a)mai**  
negative adverbial participle — valāamai, aṛiyāmai
  - mai**  
verbal nouns — aṭumai, ēlaittaṇmai, paṇintamai, cāṇṛāṇmai  
negative verbal nouns — nalkāmai, varaiyāmai, iṇumpūtu aṇmai, pāyal iṇmai
- *mō*
  - īmō**  
imperative/optative — ceytīmō, viyaṇkoṇmō, ceṇmō  
negative imperative/optative — aḷātīmō
  - mō**  
imperative/optative — uraimō, viyaṇkoṇmō, ceṇmō
- *mōr*
  - ōr**  
non-past participial nouns — niṇaiyumōr
- *mōṇ*
  - ōṇ**  
non-past participial nouns — aṛiyumōṇ
- *y*
  - *y*  
adverbial participle — ulāy, kāay, ēey, kūuy

*yāṅkum***yāṅkum**

collectives and universals — yāṅkum ... uḷavō

*yā \_um***yā \_um**collectives and universals — yāṅkaṇum, yāṇṭōrum, yātum, yātonṇum, yārkkāṇum, yārai<sup>u</sup>um, yāvatum, yāvarum, yāv<sup>u</sup>rum, yāv<sup>u</sup>ir āy<sup>u</sup>ṇum, yāvai<sup>u</sup>um*yāḷa***yāḷa**

particles — maṇiyum pōlum yāḷa niṇ naṇṇar mēṇiyum

*-va***-a**adjectival nouns — katava  
non-past participial nouns — tōṇruva  
non-past personal verbs — keṭuva, paṭukuva, pukuva, pōlva*-vatu***-atu**adjectival nouns — maṭavatu  
non-past participial nouns — poykkuvatu, citaikuvatu, uṇuvatu  
non-past personal verbs — vēvatu  
non-past verbal nouns — varuvatu, urivatu, muṭivatu*-vatai***-atai**

non-past verbal nouns — varuvatai

*-vam***-am**

non-past personal verbs — kāṅkuvam, peṭkuvam, aṇcuvam

*-vayam***-vayam**

case markers and postpositions — vaiyai vayam āka

*vayin***-vayin**

case markers and postpositions — poruḷ vayin, nam vayin, neṭuvayin

- var*
  - r*
    - singular and plural — *iruvar*
  - ar*
    - non-past participial nouns — *nacaivar*
    - non-past personal verbs — *varuvar*, *ayarvar*, *koṭukkuvar*, *perukuvar*
    - past participial nouns — *eṇṇavar*
  - avar*
    - adjectival nouns — *puṇarppinavar*
    - negative participial nouns — *aruḷātavar*, *taḷarātavar*, *uraikkallātavar*
  - var*
    - adjectival nouns — *nakaivar*, *pakaivar*
- varai*
  - varai*
    - case markers and postpositions — *malai varai*, *kaṭa varai*, *col varai*
- val*
  - al*
    - non-past personal verbs — *vālval*, *varuval*, *kāṇkuval*
    - verbal nouns — *maṇaval*
- vaḷi*
  - vaḷi*
    - case markers and postpositions — *vēṇṭu vaḷi*, *vanta vaḷi*, *uḷ vaḷi*
- vaḷ*
  - aḷ*
    - non-past participial nouns — *celkuval*, *uṇarppaval*
  - vaḷ*
    - non-past personal verbs — *uvakkuval*, *varuntuval*, *nāṇuval*, *kalaṇkuval*
- vaṇ*
  - aṇ*
    - negative participial nouns — *aḷuntātavaṇ*

non-past participial nouns — *etirkoḷvan*, *varaipavan*

non-past personal verbs — *akalkkuvan*, *mārruvan*, *varukuvan*,  
*varuvan*

**-van**

adjectival nouns — *kolaivan*, *vilaivan*

**-vaṇa**

**-a**

non-past participial nouns — *koḷvaṇa*

**-vaṇar**

**-ar**

non-past participial nouns — *viraivaṇar*

(participial noun + infinitive)

non-participle as participle — *viraivaṇar* ... *pukutara*

**-vaṇaḷ**

**-aḷ**

non-past participial nouns — *niṇaivaṇaḷ*

**-vaṇan**

**-an**

non-past participial nouns — *viraivaṇan*

**-vaṇen**

**-en**

non-past participial nouns — *viraivaṇen*

**-vā**

**-ā**

negative adjectival participle — *cāvā*

**-vātu**

**-ātu**

negative personal verbs — *cāvātu*

negative adverbial participle — *kalavātu*

**-vām**

**-ām**

adjectival nouns — *iruvām*

non-past personal verbs — *iruvām*, *celvām*

- vāy**  
**-āy**  
 imperative/optative — mēvāy  
 non-past participial nouns — varuvāy nī  
 non-past personal verbs — pōkuvāy
- vāy**  
 case markers and postpositions — tāriṇ vāy, nōkkum vāy
- vār**  
**-ār**  
 negative participial nouns — mēvār  
 non-past participial nouns — viḷuvār, aṇivār  
 non-past personal verbs — iṇaiṇcuvār
- vāl**  
**-āl**  
 non-past participial nouns — āṭuvāl aṇi nutal  
 non-past personal verbs — celvāl
- vāṇ**  
**-āṇ**  
 non-past participial nouns — cuṭuvāṇ pōla  
 non-past personal verbs — amaivāṇ(ō), parivāṇ(āl), amaikuvāṇ
- vāṇ (v + āṇ)**  
 infinitive — kuḷaivāṇ, nīkkuvāṇ
- vi-**  
**-vi**  
 causative stem — puṇarvittal
- vi**  
**-i**  
 adjectival nouns — kaḷvi  
 non-past participial nouns — aṭuvi, uṇaivi
- vi**  
 verbal nouns — vēḷvi
- viyal**  
**-viyal**  
 case markers and postpositions — puricai viyal uḷḷōr

*-vir***-avir**

adjectival nouns — ūravir

past participial nouns — cāṇṇavir, kaṇṭavir

**-ir**

adjectival nouns — kiḷavir

non-past personal verbs — iraṅkuvir

*-vīr***-īr**

non-past participial nouns — varuvīr

non-past personal verbs — viṇavuvīr

*-vu***-vu**

verbal nouns — kaḷaivu

*-vem***-em**

non-past personal verbs — kāṇkuvem

*-veṇ***-eṇ**

non-past participial nouns — kūruveṇ pōla

non past personal verbs — taṇṭuveṇ

*vēṇṭā*(infinitive/verbal noun + **vēṇṭā**)negative imperative/optative — varunta vēṇṭā, niṇaikka vēṇṭā,  
pariyal vēṇṭā*vēṇṭum*(infinitive/verbal noun + **vēṇṭum**)

imperative/optative — vaḷara vēṇṭum, aruḷal vēṇṭum

*-vēm***-ēm**

non-past participial nouns — kaṇṇoṭu celvēm

non-past personal verbs — poruvēm, nōvēm(ō)

*-vēṇ***-ēṇ**

non-past participial nouns — taruvēṇ

non-past personal verbs — *irukkuvēṇ*, *aṛikuvēṇ*, *aṛivēṇ*,  
*maruḷvēṇ*

*-vai*  
*-ai*  
adjectival nouns — *niḷalavai*, *vaḷaiyiṇavai*  
non-past personal verbs — *cey kuvai*, *puṇarkuvai*, *āvai*, *eṇcuvai*,  
*kataḷvai*

*-vai*  
verbal nouns — *vēyvai*

*vai*  
*vai*  
causative stem — *niṛaiya vaitta*

*vaikalum*  
*vaikalum*  
collectives and universals — *vaikalum*

*-vōm*  
*-ōm*  
non-past personal verbs. — *tīrkuvōm*

*-vōy*  
*-ōy*  
non-past participial nouns — *celvōy*

*-vōr*  
*-ōr*  
adjectival nouns — *putuvōr*  
non-past participial nouns — *arakkuvōr*, *valluvōr*, *ūr kuvōr*,  
*varaivōr*

*-vōḷ*  
*-ōḷ*  
non-past participial nouns — *inaivōḷ*, *pulampuvōḷ*

*-vōṇ*  
*-ōṇ*  
adjectival nouns — *kiḷavōṇ*  
non-past participial nouns — *nōkkuvōṇ*



attai  
 antil  
 antō  
 am  
 amma  
 ammā  
 arō  
 annō  
 āñka  
 āñku  
 āñkē  
 ār  
 āl  
 um  
 en(n)a  
 ē  
 ō  
 ōrum  
 kāṇ  
 kurai  
 kol(l)ō  
 kon(nu)  
 tān  
 til(la)  
 teyya  
 teyyō  
 marṛu(m)  
 marṛai  
 mannē  
 man(nō)

manṛa  
 mā  
 mātu  
 matō  
 māḷa  
 yāḷa

<b>aḥtu</b> 'it, that one'		<b>impar</b> 'here'	( <i>pura.287:14</i> )
	( <i>aka.335:3; kuru.18:3</i> )	<b>iruvar</b> 'two people'	( <i>aink.64:3</i> )
<b>aṅku</b> 'there'	( <i>kuri:97</i> )	<b>iruvām</b> 'we two'	( <i>kuru.237:4</i> )
<b>attupai</b> 'that much'	( <i>kuri:13</i> )	<b>iruvīr</b> 'you two'	( <i>pura.45:6</i> )
<b>atu</b> 'it, that one'		<b>iruvēm</b> 'we two'	( <i>kuri.21</i> )
	( <i>pari.15:53; narr.24:9</i> )	<b>iv</b> 'these ones'	( <i>pari.4:33</i> )
<b>ampar</b> 'yonder'	( <i>peru:117</i> )	<b>ivan</b> 'here'	( <i>narr.4:5</i> )
<b>av</b> 'those items, those things'		<b>ivar</b> 'these people' (unidentified)	
	( <i>pari.4:33</i> )		( <i>narr.6:6</i> )
<b>avaṇ</b> 'there'	( <i>ciru:143</i> )	<b>ivar</b> 'these boys'	( <i>pura.46:3</i> )
<b>avar</b> 'those men'	( <i>pari.5:40</i> )	<b>ivar</b> 'these women'	( <i>pura.201:1</i> )
<b>avar</b> 'those women'	( <i>pari.7:44</i> )	<b>ivaḷ</b> 'she'	( <i>kuru.229:1</i> )
<b>avar</b> 'those people'	( <i>pari.4:74</i> )	<b>ivan</b> 'he'	( <i>kuru.229:1</i> )
<b>avaḷ</b> 'she'	( <i>narr.159:8</i> )	<b>ivai</b> 'these ones'	( <i>narr.12:7</i> )
<b>avan</b> 'he'	( <i>pari.20:82</i> )	<b>inru</b> 'this day'	( <i>narr.48:1</i> )
<b>avai</b> 'those items, those things'		<b>inrai</b> 'this day'	( <i>kuru.199:6</i> )
	( <i>pura.257:10; pari.15:7</i> )	<b>inai</b> 'of this nature'	( <i>narr.349:5</i> )
<b>aruvar</b> 'six people'	( <i>tiru:255</i> )	<b>īnkaṇ</b> 'here'	( <i>narr.70:7</i> )
<b>anru</b> 'that day, then'	( <i>aka.19:1</i> )	<b>īnku</b> 'here'	( <i>pura.36:11</i> )
<b>anrai</b> 'that day'	( <i>narr.48:1</i> )	<b>īnku</b> 'in this manner'	( <i>narr.55:12</i> )
<b>anai</b> 'of that nature'	( <i>narr.70:6</i> )	<b>īṇṭu</b> 'here'	( <i>pura.38:16</i> )
<b>ānkaṇ</b> 'there'	( <i>pati.23:24</i> )	<b>īṇṭai</b> 'here'	( <i>kuru.54:1</i> )
<b>ānku</b> 'there'	( <i>pari.6:104</i> )	<b>ītu</b> 'this one'	( <i>pura.208:3</i> )
<b>ānku</b> 'then'	( <i>pura.152:21</i> )	<b>ītōḷi/īttoḷi</b> 'here'	( <i>kali.117:13</i> )
<b>ānku</b> 'in that manner'	( <i>kali.18:7</i> )	<b>īraimpatinmar</b> '100 people'	
<b>ānkē</b> 'then'	( <i>kali.90:15</i> )		( <i>peru:415</i> )
<b>āṇṭu</b> 'there'	( <i>pura.38:16</i> )	<b>īn</b> 'here'	( <i>aink.401:5</i> )
<b>āṇṭai</b> 'there'	( <i>kali.20:16</i> )	<b>utu</b> 'that one'	( <i>narr.96:3</i> )
<b>iḥtu</b> 'this one'	( <i>kuru.158:6</i> )	<b>umpar</b> 'yonder'	( <i>narr.198:3</i> )
<b>īnku</b> 'here'	( <i>kuru.175:5</i> )	<b>uv</b> 'those ones'	( <i>pari.4:33</i> )
<b>itu</b> 'this one'	( <i>narr.47:6</i> )	<b>uval</b> 'she'	( <i>pari.11:123</i> )

**uvan** 'he' (*pari.12:55*)  
**ūṅkaṇ** 'yonder' (*narr.246:1*)  
**ūṅku** 'before, then' (*narr.101:9*)  
**eṅku(m)** '(every)where' (*kali.144:16*)  
**eññāṇru** 'when?' (*kali.110:16*)  
**eṇmar** 'eight people' (*pari.8:5*)  
**ettuṇai** 'how much?' (*pura.141:13*)  
**ev** 'which' (*pura.187:3*)  
**evaṇ(ar)** 'where (is he)?' (*kuru.126:2*)  
**eval** 'which one?' (*pari.6:91*)  
**evan** 'what?' (*narr.130:9*)  
**evan** 'for what reason?' (*kali. 60:14*)  
**eḷuvar** 'seven people' (*ciru.113*)  
**eṇ** 'why?' (*narr.334:9*)  
**enru** 'what day?', 'any day' (*narr.1:2*)  
**enna** 'what?' (*narr.130:9*)  
**enna** 'of what sort?' (*narr.94:7*)  
**ennatu** 'of what kind?, of any kind' (*narr.219:3*)  
**ennar** 'person of what sort?' (*narr.64:1*)  
**ennal** 'woman of what sort?' (*narr.312:9*)  
**ennan** 'man of what sort?' (*kuru.33:2*)

**ennai** 'for what reason?/why?/how?' (*pari.6:94*)  
**enai** 'how many' (*pura.301:7*)  
**enai** 'of what nature?' (*pura.136:15; aka.369:1*)  
**aivar** 'five people' (*tiru.254*)  
**ottan** 'one man' (*kali.61:1*)  
**otti** 'one woman' (*kali.143:8*)  
**oru tān** 'he alone' (*pura.76:13*)  
**oru nī** 'you alone' (*tiru.294*)  
**orutti** 'one woman' (*pura.144:11*)  
**oruva** 'you, one person' (*tiru.262*)  
**oruvar** 'one person' (*aiṅk.64:3*)  
**oruvan** 'one man' (*aka.110:14*)  
**oruvanēn** 'I, one man' (*kali.140:12*)  
**oruvir** 'you' (*malai.218*)  
**oruvīr** 'you' (*pura.45:5*)  
**onpatinmar** 'nine people' (*pati.pa.5:19*)  
**ōr yān** 'I alone' (*kuru.6:4*)  
**ñāṅkar** 'that time' (*peru.196*)  
**ñāṇru** 'that day' (*narr.218:1*)  
**ñāṇrai** 'that day' (*narr.287:7*)  
**tām** 'they' (*matu.422*)  
**tām** 'they, those things' (*kali.9:19*)  
**tām** 'they indeed' (*kali.9:19*)  
**tān** 'he' (*malai. 559*)  
**tān** 'she' (*narr.12:9*)  
**tān** 'it (indeed)' (*kali.21:10*)  
**tān** 'self' (*aiṅk 303:2*)

<b>nām</b> 'we'	( <i>kuri</i> :22)	<b>yār</b> 'who? (masculine)'	
<b>nālvar</b> 'four people'	( <i>aka</i> .86:12)		( <i>pura</i> .77:6)
<b>nān</b> 'I'	( <i>pari</i> .20:82)	<b>yār</b> 'who (unidentified)?'	
<b>nī</b> 'you'	( <i>kuri</i> :8)		( <i>narr</i> .269:9)
<b>nīyir</b> 'you'	( <i>aka</i> .8:17)	<b>yāraḷ</b> 'who (feminine)?'	
<b>nīr</b> 'you'	( <i>matu</i> :738)		( <i>kuru</i> .19:5)
<b>nūrruvar</b> 'The Hundred'		<b>yārīr</b> 'who (human plural)?'	
	( <i>kali</i> .52:2)		( <i>pura</i> .141:5)
<b>patinmar</b> 'ten people'	( <i>pari</i> .8:4)	<b>yārēm</b> 'who?'	( <i>kali</i> .82:18)
<b>patinorumūvar</b> '33 people'		<b>yārai</b> 'who?'	( <i>narr</i> .395:1, 2)
	( <i>tiru</i> :167)	<b>yāvaṇatu</b> 'where?, how?'	
<b>pannoruvar</b> 'eleven people'			( <i>pura</i> .301:8)
	( <i>pari</i> .8:7)	<b>yāvatu</b> 'in what way?, how?'	
<b>mūvar</b> 'three people'	( <i>poru</i> :54)		( <i>narr</i> .331:11)
<b>mūvīr</b> 'you three'	( <i>pura</i> .109:2)	<b>yāvar</b> 'who?'	( <i>pati</i> .20:21)
<b>yā</b> 'what?'		<b>yāvaḷ</b> 'who?'	( <i>aink</i> .370:4)
	( <i>narr</i> .198:1; <i>pura</i> .167:9)	<b>yāvīr</b> 'who?'	( <i>pura</i> .88:1)
<b>yāṅkaṇam</b> 'in what way?, how?'		<b>yāvai</b> 'what?'	( <i>aka</i> .42:7)
	( <i>pura</i> .30:11)	<b>yān</b> 'I'	( <i>kuri</i> :12)
<b>yāṅṇaṇam</b> 'in what way?, how?'			
	( <i>narr</i> .338:6)		
<b>yāṅkaṇum</b> 'anywhere'	( <i>aka</i> .7:3)		
<b>yāṅku</b> 'in what way?'	( <i>narr</i> .29:6)		
<b>yāṅkum</b> 'everywhere'			
	( <i>pura</i> .56:15)		
<b>yāṇṭu</b> 'where?'	( <i>pura</i> .86:3)		
<b>yāṇṭu</b> 'where?/how?'	( <i>narr</i> .110:9)		
<b>yāṇṭai</b> 'where?'	( <i>kuru</i> .379:1)		
<b>yātu</b> 'what kind?, why?'			
	( <i>pari</i> .20:44)		
<b>yām</b> 'we'	( <i>malai</i> :53)		



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Grammar:

*Naṇṇūl - viruttiyurai*

First edition 1956; fourth reprint 1966

The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.

*Tolkāppiyam*

*eḷuttatikāram, Iḷampūraṇam*

First edition 1955; fourth reprint 1974

The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.

*Tolkāppiyam*

*eḷuttatikāram, Nacciṇārkkiniyam*

First edition 1944; fifth reprint 1972

The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.

*Tolkāppiyam - collatikāram - Iḷampūraṇam*

First edition 1963; first reprint 1973

The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.

*Tolkāppiyam - collatikāram - Cēṇāvaraiyam*

First edition 1923; eighth reprint, 1974

The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.

*Tolkāppiyam - collatikāram*

*Kallāṭaṇār viruttiyuraiyum paḷaiya uraiyum*

Commentary by K. Sundaramurthy

First edition 1964

The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.

*Tolkāppiyam - collatikāram -Teyvaccilaiyār urai*

Karantai Tamil-c-caṅka-p-patippu, 1929

*Tolkāppiyam - poruḷatikāram*

*akattiṇaiyiyal, puṇattiṇaiyiyal*

*Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar urai*

First edition 1947

The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.

*Tolkāppiyam - poruḷatikāram - Iḷampūraṇam*

First edition 1953; sixth reprint 1977

The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.

*Tolkāppiyam - poruḷatikāram - Pērācīriyam*

First edition 1951; second reprint 1966

The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.

*Yapparuṅkalak Kārikai*

*Kuṇacākarar uraiyuṭaṇ*

Second edition, 1968

Dr. U.V. Saminathier Library, Tiruvanmiyur, Madras-41

## Poetry:

*Aiṅkuṛunūru mūlamum paḷaiya uraiyum*

Edited by U.V. Saminathier

Third edition, 1944

Kabeer Printing Works, Triplicane, Madras

*Akanānūru (1-120)*

*kaḷiṛṛiyānai nīrai*

Commentaries by N.M. Venkatasamy Nattar and R. Venkatacalam Pillai

First edition, 1947

The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.

*Akanānūru (121-400)*

*maṇimiṭai pavaḷam and nittilakkōvai*

commentary by P.V. Somasundaranar

Third edition, 1977

The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.

*Caṅka ilakkiyam - pāṭṭum tokaiyum*

Edited by S. Vaiyapuri Pillai

Second edition, 1967

Printed at Jeevan Achakam, Madras - 5

Pari Nilaiyam, 59 Broadway, Madras

*Cilappatikāram*

with N.M. Venkatasamy Nattar's commentary

First edition, August 1942

The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.

*Kalittokai*

Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar uraiyum viḷakkamum



**vilakka urai by P.V. Somasundaranar**

**First edition, 1969**

**The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.**

***Kuṟuntokai mūamum uraiyum***

**Edited by U.V. Saminathier**

**Fourth edition, 1962**

**Kabeer Printing Works, Triplicane, Madras**

***Maṇimēkalai***

**(ed.) U.V. Saminathier, seventh edition, 1981**

**Dr. U.V. Saminathier Library, Tiruvanmiyur, Madras-41**

***Muttollāyiram***

***kalaka veliyīṭu* - 419, April 1946**

**The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.**

***Narṛiṇai nāṇūru - mūlamum uraiyum***

**Pinnattur A. Narayanasamy urai**

**First edition, 1952**

**The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.**

***Pattuppāṭṭu - mūlamum Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar uraiyum***

**U.V. Saminathier's commentary**

**Sixth edition, 1961**

**Kabeer Printing Works, Triplicane, Madras**

***Paripāṭal mūlamum Parimēlaḷakar uraiyum***

**Edited by U.V. Saminathier**

**Third edition, 1948**

**Kabeer Printing Works, Triplicane, Madras**

***Patirrupattu***

*mūlamum paḷaiya uraiyum*

Edited by U.V. Saminathier

Fourth edition, 1945

Kabeer Printing Works, Triplicane, Madras

***Puranāṇūru***

*mūlamum uraiyum*

Edited by U.V. Saminathier

Sixth edition, 1963

Kabeer Printing Works, Triplicane, Madras

***Puranāṇūru (1-200)***

Commentary by Auvai S. Duraisamy Pillai

First edition 1947, fifth reprint, 1967

The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.

***Puranāṇūru (200-400)***

Commentary by Auvai S. Duraisamy Pillai

First edition 1951, fourth reprint, 1972

The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,  
Tinnevely, Ltd.

**Other Sources:**

**Books:**

Ed. S. Agesthalingom and G. Srinivasa Varma

*Auxiliaries in Dravidian*

Department of Linguistics

Publication No.70, 1980

Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Tamilnadu, India

Arden, A.H. 1891

*A Progressive Grammar of the Tamil Language*

Revised by A.C. Clayton

Fifth reprint 1976

The Christian Literature Society

Post Box 501, Park Town, Madras 600 003

Caldwell, Robert. 1875

*A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages*

Third reprint 1976

University of Madras, Madras, India

*Index des mots de la litterature tamoule ancienne*

Volumes I-III

Institut Francais D'Indologie

Pondichery, India, 1967

Meenakshisundaran, T.P.

*A History of Tamil Language*

First edition 1965

Linguistic Society of India, Deccan College, Poona, India

Paramasivam, K.

*ikkālat tamiḷ marapu (in Tamil)*

Annam (P) Ltd., 2, Sivan Kovil Street, Sivagangai - 623 560, Tamilnadu, India

Ramanujan, A.K.

*Poems of Love and War*

Columbia University Press, New York, 1985

Schiffman, Harold F.

*A Reference Grammar of Spoken Kannada*

University of Washington Press, Seattle, USA, 1983

Subrahmanyam, P.S.  
*Dravidian Verb Morphology*  
Department of Linguistics  
Publication No.24, 1971  
Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Tamilnadu, India

Tokunaga, Muneo  
*Tamil*  
Asian and African Grammatical Manual No.13x  
Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa  
Tokyo 1981

Zvelebil, K. V.  
*Tamil Literature*  
Handbuch Der Orientalistik  
E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1975

Zvelebil, K.  
*The Smile of Murugan*  
E.J.Brill, Leiden, 1973

K. Zvelebil, Yu. Glasov, M. Andronov  
Ed. K. Zvelebil  
*Introduction to the Historical Grammar of the Tamil Language*  
*Part I - Preliminary Textual Analysis*  
USSR Academy of Sciences  
Institute of the People of Asia  
Nauka Publishing House  
Central Department of Oriental Literature  
Moscow 1967

Kamil Zvelebil - Jaroslav Vachek  
*Introduction to the Historical Grammar of the Tamil Language*  
Oriental Institute in Academia

Publishing House of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences  
Prague 1970

**Articles/Papers:**

Agesthalingom, S.

“Adjectives in Dravidian”

*Dravidian Linguistics - V*

Ed. S. Agesthalingom and P.S. Subrahmanyam

Department of Linguistics, Publication No. 47

First edition 1976, pp.1-38

Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Tamilnadu, India

Arunachalam, K.P.

“A New Theory on Appellative Verbs (KUTIPPUVINAI)”

*Proceedings of the Second International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies*

Volume 1, pp.329-333

International Institute of Tamil Research, Madras, January 1968

Arunachalam, P.

“Verbal Participles in Tamil”

*Proceedings of the Second International Conference-Seminar of Tamil*

Volume II, pp.508-512

International Institute of Tamil Research, Madras, January 1968

Balasubramanian, K.

“Historical Development of Aytam”

*Dravidian Linguistics - V*

Ed. S. Agesthalingom and P.S. Subrahmanyam

Department of Linguistics, Publication No. 47

First edition 1976, pp.561-582

Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Tamilnadu, India

Emeneau, Murray B.

“Some Notes on Dravidian intensives”

*Festschrift for Henry Hoenigswald*, pp.109-113

Ed. George Cardona and Norman H. Zide

Gunter Narr Verlag Tübingen

Israel, M.

“Imperatives in Early Tamil”

*Proceedings of the First International Conference of Dravidian Linguistics*

April 1972, pp.331-337

Department of Linguistics, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, India

Kothandaraman, R.

“ceytu vāypaṭṭu viṇakaḷ” (in Tamil)

*Vaiyai* (in Tamil)-II, First edition 1975, pp.1-22

Madurai University Publication No.15

Madurai University, Palkalai Nagar, Madurai, Tamilnadu, India

Kothandaraman, R.

“Finite Verbs in Tamil - Some Preliminary Observations”

*Dravidian Linguistics - V*

Ed. S. Agesthalingom and P.S. Subrahmanyam

Department of Linguistics, Publication No. 47

First edition 1976, pp.353-363

Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Tamilnadu, India

Murugarathanam, T.

“Adjectives in Old Tamil”

*Proceedings of the Second International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies*

Volume 1, pp.394-400

International Institute of Tamil Research, Madras, January 1968

Radhakrishnan, R.

“Aytam: Its Origin and Nature”

*Proceedings of the First International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies*

Volume 2, pp.623-628

International Institute of Tamil Research, Madras, April 1966

Ramasamy, K.

“Timeless Relative Participles in Dravidian”

*Dravidian Linguistics - V*

Ed. S. Agesthalingom and P.S. Subrahmanyam

Department of Linguistics, Publication No. 47

First edition 1976, pp.193-205

Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Tamilnadu, India

Schiffman, Harold

“Causativity and the Tamil Verbal Base”

*International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics*

Volume V, No.2, pp.238-248

Sjoberg, Andree F.

“The Role of Aspect in the Dravidian Simple Verb”

*Proceedings of the Second International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies*

Volume I, pp.288-290

International Institute of Tamil Research, Madras, 1968

Subramanian, S.V.

“Tense Marker in Dravidian”

*Dravidian Linguistics - V*

Ed. S. Agesthalingom and P.S. Subrahmanyam

Department of Linguistics, Publication No. 47

First edition 1976, pp.243-249

Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Tamilnadu, India

Thinnappan, SP.

“Alapetai in Tamil”

*Dravidian Linguistics - V*

Ed. S. Agesthialingom and P.S. Subrahmanyam

Department of Linguistics, Publication No. 47

First edition 1976, pp.539-560

Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Tamilnadu, India

Veluppillai, A.

“Adjectives in Tamil”

*Proceedings of the First International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies*

Volume 2, pp.815-823

International Institute of Tamil Research, Madras, April 1966





## INDEX

**NOTE:** This index contains items which are not included in the "Appendix." Accompanying each entry is the number of the page where the item is treated. See "Appendix" for various affixes, case markers, postpositions, particles, and pronouns.



**A, ā, ai, au**

adverbial participles as adverbs

904

aesthetic behavior 215

aesthetic components 190

alliteration 113, 190

alliteration across lines 191

alliteration within a line 192

alphabetical ordering 47

alveolar 43

antonyms 190

assessment/evaluation 127, 187

axioms 187

**aḥriṇai** 267*akanānūru* 9, analysis 966**akappāṭṭu vaṇṇam** 210**akam** 217**akaval ōcai** ('calling sound') 188**akaippu vaṇṇam** 212**aṅkatam** 187**acai** (basic metrical unit) 116**acai** and syllable 118**acai** and word 118**aṭakkiyal** 180**aṭi** (line) 140**aṭi**-alliteration 191**aṭukku** ("stacks") 927**aṭai** ("enclosed lone words") 178**aṭai-nilai-k-kilavi** 178**ampōtaraṅka oru pōku** 183**ammai** 215**arākam** ("rapid movement") 173**alaku** 216**alapeṭai** 19, 48, 240**alapeṭai vaṇṇam** 209**alavaṭi** 142**aḷavu** (length) 186**aḷavu eṇ** 176**aṟucīraṭi** 148**ā** in adjectival participles 856**ā** in adverbial participles 857**ā** following a nominal or verb 862**ā** used as a suffix 855**ā**, traditional treatment of 859**ācīriya uriccīr** 131, 133**ācīriya-t-taḷai** 156**ācīriyam** 131, 167**ācīriyappā** 143**āytam** 41, 44**"āna,"** special note 894**aikāra-k-kuṟukkam** 46*aiṅkurunūru* 423, analysis 944**aiñcīraṭi** 148**aukāra-k-kuṟukkam** 46**B**

bi-labial 43

breakpoint 942

**C**

cardinal numerals 444

causative/effective 521

changes across stems and affixes

61

comparison, adverbs of 918

comparison, degrees 908

comparative degree 916

comparison, plain/basic 910

comparison, superlative 917

completive 542

components of subject matter 215

composition, process of 187

conjoining 52

consonant clusters 50

consonants 43

## 2 - Index

contents of Tamil poetry	217
contrast by referents	203, 204
contrast by word and referent	204
contrast by words	203
core structural components	115
<b>caṅkam</b>	2
<b>caṅkam</b> (classics)	2
<b>caṅkam</b> (literature)	2
<b>canta vērupātu</b>	207
<b>cama nilai vañci</b>	224
<b>cārpū eḷuttu</b>	41, 45
<b>cāriyai</b>	294, 543
<b>cintaṭi</b>	142
<b>cirreṇ</b> ('small count')	176
<b>cittira vaṇṇam</b>	209
<b>cinnam</b> ('smallest count')	176
<b>cīr</b> (metrical foot)	126
formulaic names	131
types	127
<b>cīr</b> and syllable	130
<b>cīr</b> and word	130
<b>cīr</b> , conventions of evaluating	128
<b>cīr vakai aṭi</b>	141
<b>curitakam</b> ("folding")	179
<b>centoṭai</b>	191, 203
<b>ceppal ōcai</b> ('replying sound')	189
<b>ceyyuḷ</b>	186
<b>ceyyuḷ-icai-nirai-aḷapeṭai</b>	241, 243
<b>col-icai-aḷapeṭai</b>	241, 243
<b>col poruḷ muraṇ</b>	204
<b>col muraṇ</b>	203
compound, semantic interpretation	470
<b>coṇcīr</b>	4
<b>coṇcīr-aṭi</b>	152

## D

demonstrative/deictic pronouns	282
dental	43
dependent letters	44
distribution of consonants	49
distribution of vowels	48
doublets ( <b>iraṭṭai-k-kiḷavi</b> )	928
doublets and stacks	927
doubling/hardening	56
dramatis personae	114
Dravidian languages	1
<b>E, ē</b>	
earlier convention	155
elongation	241
grammatical possibilities	245
metrical requirement	244
elongation vs. clusters	247
emphatic pronouns	281
examples of	
<b>centoṭai</b>	203
<b>nēr acai</b> patterns	123
<b>nērpū acai</b> patterns	125
<b>nirai acai</b> patterns	124
<b>niraipu acai</b> patterns	126
exclusive plural	267
expositions	187
extension	28
<b>eccam</b>	218
<b>etukai</b>	191
<b>eṭṭuttokai</b>	2
<b>eṇ</b> ("counts; groups")	174
<b>eṇṇu vaṇṇam</b>	211
<b>eḷucīraṭi</b>	150
<b>eḷuttu</b> ("letters")	40
<b>eḷuttu</b> and syllable	41

<b>eḷuttu</b> , parts of prosodic units	50	<b>iyaipu-t-toṭai</b>	191, 216
<b>eḷuttu</b> , metrical significance	119	<b>iyaipu vaṇṇam</b>	208
<b>eḷuttu</b> , number permitted in a cīr	129	<b>iyal acai</b> ('natural acai')	117
<b>eruttu</b>	170	<b>iyarcīr</b> ("natural feet")	131, 132
<b>ēntal vaṇṇam</b>	213	<b>iyarcīr veṇ-taḷai</b>	159
<b>F</b>		<b>iyarcīr vellāṭi</b>	151
finite verbs	585	<b>iraṭṭai-k-kīḷavi</b> ("doublets")	927
formation mechanism	28	<b>iraṭṭai-t-toṭai</b>	205
formulaic names for cīr	131	<b>īḷaipu</b>	217
four-acai-c-cīr	127	<b>in-icai-aḷapeṭai</b>	241, 243
<b>G</b>		<b>īr-acai-c-cīr</b>	127
grammatical case	303	<b>J</b>	
<b>H</b>		juxtaposed vowels	48, 248
hapax legomenon	265	juxtaposition of like-consonants	249
"hardened" sounds	57	<b>K</b>	
hardening/doubling	56	Kannada	1
<b>I, i</b>		<b>kaṭṭaḷai aṭi</b>	141
imperfective	562	<b>kaṭai-k-kurāi</b>	21
improvisation	187	<b>kali</b>	131, 167
inclusive plural	267	<b>kali-t-taḷai, kalittaḷai</b>	156, 159
incompletive/non-completive	562	<b>kali-veṇ-pāṭṭu</b>	183
infinitives as adverbs	905	<b>kali-veṇpā</b>	184
inflectional increments	294	<b>kalippā</b>	145, 170
interrogative pronouns	284	<b>kaḷi neṭil aṭi</b>	142
"introduction; prelude"	170	<b>kaḷavu</b>	217
<b>iṭai-iṭṭa</b> -alliteration	192	<b>kaḷaṇ</b>	217
<b>iṭai inam</b>	42	<b>karpu</b>	217
<b>iṭai eṇ</b>	176	<b>kālam</b>	217
<b>iṭai-nilai-p-pāṭṭu</b>	171	<b>kurṛeḷuttu</b>	42
<b>iṇai</b> -alliteration	192	<b>kurriyal ikaram</b>	45
<b>iyarkai aḷapeṭai</b>	241, 243	<b>kurriyal ukaram</b>	45
<b>iyarkai eḷuttu</b>	41	<b>kuril</b>	42
		<b>kurukkam</b> ('shortening')	46

#### 4 - Index

<b>kuṛaḷ aṭi</b>	141
<b>kuṛu veṇ pāṭṭu</b>	172
<b>kuṛuñcīr vaṇṇam</b>	213
<b>kūṛru</b>	217
<b>kūṇ</b> (refrain)	145
<b>kēṭpōr</b>	217
<b>koccaka-oru-pōku</b>	182
<b>koccaka-k-kalippā</b>	185
<b>koccakam</b> ("pleats")	173

#### L

labio-dental	43
later conventions	159, 194
lengths of letters ( <b>māttirai</b> )	46
letters, parts of prosodic units	50
letters, number permitted in a metrical foot	129
line ( <b>aṭi</b> )	
"fast line"	150
<b>vañci</b> line	149
lines, types	140
lines, in terms of letters	141, 143
lines, in terms of metrical feet	142, 147, 154
lines, conventions of grading	141
like-consonant clusters	247
liquids	43

#### M

Malayalam	1
mechanism of extension	39
mechanism of periphrasis	39
mechanism of stem mutation	29
mechanism of suffixation	29
meters produced by different <b>cīr</b>	131
metrical binding ( <b>taḷai</b> )	155

metrical bindings, meters, lines	161
metrical significance of letters	119
metrics	2
modes of employing "alliteration" ( <b>toṭai</b> )	205
mutation	55
mutated oblique stem	294

<b>makara-k-kuṛukkam</b>	46
<b>mayakku aṭi vañcippā</b>	229
<b>maṛai moḷi kiḷakkum mantirai</b>	186
<b>māttirai</b>	46, 241
<b>ināṭṭu</b> ("fastening, wrapping")	214
<b>mirai-k-kavi</b>	209
<b>mutal eḷuttu</b>	41
<b>mutu col</b>	187
<b>mutu moḷi</b>	186
<b>muṭukiyal aṭi</b> ("fast line")	150
<b>muṭuku vaṇṇam</b>	213
<b>muraṇ</b> ('contrast')	191, 203
<b>muraṇ toṭai</b>	203
<b>murriyal ukaram</b>	45
<b>munnam</b>	218
<b>mū-v-acai-c-cīr</b>	127
<b>mey</b> ('body')	43
<b>mey eḷuttu</b>	41
<b>meyppāṭu</b>	218
<b>mel inam</b>	42
<b>mellicai vaṇṇam</b>	208
<b>moḷi</b>	215
<b>mōnai, mōnai-t-toṭai</b>	191

#### N

nasals	43
natural letters ( <b>iyarkai eḷuttu</b> )	41

negative, "attributive"	840	<b>nēriya acai</b>	116
negative, "existential"	840	<b>nūl</b>	186
negative markers	840	<b>nūrpā</b>	207
neuter singular adjectival nouns as adverbs	906	<b>nōkku</b>	217
noun phrase	467	<b>O, ō</b>	
non-causative/affective	521	occurrence of juxtaposed items	248
non-completive markers	562	oblique stem of adjectives	437
non-past tense markers	562	oblique stems of non-pronouns	299
non-past tense suffixes	562	oblique stems of pronouns	296
numeral pronouns	290	ordinal numerals	446
numerals, cardinal	444		
numerals, ordinal	446		
<b>nalipu vaṇṇam</b>	209	<b>ottālicai-k-kali</b>	181
<b>nārcīr aṭi</b>	213	<b>oru pōku ottālicai-k-kali</b>	182
<b>nirai acai patterns</b>	124	<b>orūu vaṇṇam</b>	211
<b>niraipu acai patterns</b>	126	<b>oḷi-y-acai</b>	5
<b>nirai</b>	116	<b>oḷuku vaṇṇam</b>	211
<b>nirai onru āciriya-t-taḷai</b>	156, 159	<b>orru</b>	41
<b>niraipu acai</b>	116	<b>orru-aḷapeṭai</b>	243
<b>niral-nirai mode (of "alliteration")</b>	205, 206	<b>onrā vañci-t-taḷai</b>	159
<b>nilam ("base")</b>	187	<b>onriya vañci-t-taḷai</b>	159
<b>nilai maṇṭila āciriya</b>	239	<b>ōcai (sound)</b>	188
<b>neṭṭeluttu</b>	42	<b>ōr-acai-c-cīr</b>	127
<b>neṭil</b>	42		
<b>neṭil aṭi</b>	142	<b>P</b>	
<b>neṭu veṇ pāṭṭu</b>	172	palatal	43
<b>neṭuñcīr vaṇṇam</b>	209	participle, nominal	712
<b>nēr</b>	116	participle, relative	715, 721, 728
<b>nēr acai patterns</b>	123	participle, verbal	712
<b>nēr onru āciriya-t-taḷai</b>	156, 159	passive voice	534
<b>nēr nilai vañci</b>	224	past markers	543
<b>nērpū</b>	116	past tense markers	543
<b>nērpū acai patterns</b>	125	past tense suffixes	543
<b>nēraṭi</b>	142	periphrasis	26, 28
		personal pronouns	281



## 6 - Index

plural suffixes	271	retroflex	43
positional categorization of		rhythmic effect	113
“alliteration” ( <b>toṭai</b> )	191	riddles	187
prepositions	303	root	54
processes of Tamil prosody	187		
proforms (pronouns)	286	<b>S</b>	
prosodic components	115	sangam	2
perfective	542	Sanskrit	10
personal verbs	585	satire	187
present tense markers	562	scanning poems	219
		semi-vowels	43
<b>pattuppāṭṭu</b>	2	shortening	46, 55
<b>paripāṭṭu</b>	170	singing	187
<b>paripāṭal</b>	181	song or poem	187
<b>payan</b>	217	<b>kuru veṇ pāṭṭu</b>	172
<b>panuval</b>	215	“middle songs”	171
<b>pā</b> (meter, poem)	167	<b>neṭu veṇ pāṭṭu</b>	172
<b>pā</b> as “meter”	167	sound	
<b>pā</b> as “poem”	169	‘calling sound’	188
<b>pāa vaṇṇam</b>	207	‘jumpy sound’	189
<b>pāṭṭu</b>	187, 188	‘replying sound’	189
<b>pāṇi</b>	126	‘sedate/suspending sound’	190
<b>pici</b>	186, 187	stacks ( <b>aṭukku</b> )	930
<b>pulavar</b>	114	stems, a note	53
<b>pulan</b>	216	stem mutation	25, 28, 55
<i>puranāṇūru</i> 278, analysis	954	stops	43
<b>purappāṭṭu vaṇṇam</b>	210	structure of a <b>kalippā</b>	181
<b>puram</b>	217	structure of a <b>paripāṭal</b>	181
<b>pēreṇ</b> (‘large count’)	176	sub-categorization of <b>toṭai</b>	192
<b>poruḷ</b>	187	suffixation	28
<b>poruḷ muraṇ</b>	203, 204	syllable and “ <b>acai</b> ”	118
<b>poruḷ vakai</b>	218	syllable and “ <b>cīr</b> ”	130
<b>pōkku</b> (‘wrapping’)	179		
		<b>T</b>	
<b>R</b>		Tamil letters ( <b>eḷuttu</b> )	40
recitation	187	Tamil poem, traditional approach	114
reflexive pronouns	282		
refrain ( <b>kūn</b> )	145	Telugu	1

types of			
cīr	127	uraḷ kali	186
lines	140	uruppu ('limb')	114
lines in terms of letters	141		
lines in terms of metrical feet	142	V	
taḷai	155	velar	43
taḷai, pā, aṭi	161	vowel clusters	247
taravu	170	vowels	42
taṇi-c-col	179		
tāḷicai	171	vañci	131, 167
tāḷam	126, 188	vañci aṭi (vañci line)	149
tāa vaṇṇam	208	vañci uriccīr	131, 137
tiṇai	217, 218	vañci-t-taḷai	156
tuḷḷal ōcai	189	vañcippā	144
turai	218	vaṇṇaka ottāḷicai-k-kali	182
tūkku	127, 187	vaṇṇam (rhythmic variation)	207
tūṅkal ōcai	190	val inam	42
tūṅkal vaṇṇam	212	vaḷi-y-acai	5
tēva-pāṇi	183	vākkiyam	189
toṭar nilaic ceyyuḷ	212	vallicai vaṇṇam	208
toṭai ('stringing')	190	vāram ("container")	180
toṭai, modes of employing	205	vaṇṇappu iyal	215
tonmai	216	vāymoli	187
tōl	216	vāypāṭu	131
		viruntu	216
U		veṇ cīr	131
"unhardened" sounds	57	veṇ-kalippā	185
unlike-consonant clusters	247	veṇ-taḷai	156
		veṇcīr veṇ-taḷai	159
uyar tiṇai	267	veṇpā	131, 144, 167
uyir ('life-breath')	42	veṇpā uriccīr	135
uyir aḷapeṭai	243	vaippu ('keeping, preserving')	179
uyir eḷuttu	41		
uri acai	117		
uruṭṭu vaṇṇam	213	W	
urai	186	word and "acai"	118
urai-y-acai	5	word and "cīr"	130

## 8 - Index

**Y**

**Yāpparuṅkalakkārikai** 159

**yāppu** 187







